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# THE INCURABLE ROMANTIC

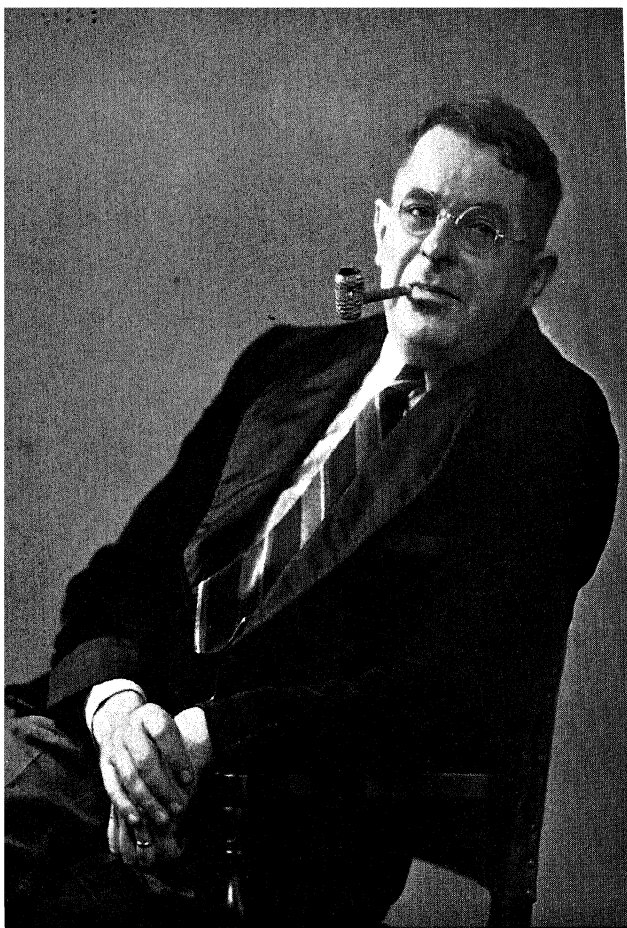


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*Baker Art Gallery, Columbus, Ohio*

I recommend romanticism as a guide to genial living.

THE  
INCURABLE  
ROMANTIC

*By*  
RODERICK PEATTIE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
NEW YORK

1941

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RODERICK PEATTIE

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Dedicated to an Idea  
which is spelled  
R-O-M-A-N-C-E  
but which I pronounce  
Margaret



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

When I began this book I intended to call it "The Education of an Unimportant Man." It still is that story; therefore, if you are looking for names of great, heroic deeds and figures, read no farther. But I have changed the title because as I proceeded I saw that what I was trying to set down was the story of how an unimportant man strives to make the unimportant details of life important, and as he does so his life becomes dramatic and significant to him. This note is not, therefore, an apologia so much as an invitation. Every person, somebody said, has within himself or herself material for at least one good book. I, for one, have found it immensely stimulating to take stock at the halfway mark! Watch yourself, you may be an author yet.



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# THE INCURABLE ROMANTIC



## I

### MIDDLE-BORDER ORIGINS

**I**T was early August. All day a steel sun had borne down upon the limitless fields of corn, withering the broad leaves before the very eyes of the farmers. No one ventured abroad. The dusty roads were untraveled and lifeless except for the petulant dust whorls. Then lengthening shadows of evening eased the seared wounds of day. But the sun's heat gave way to stifling night with no other transition. People lay on their beds, exhausted but sleepless, and watched distant lightning. All of nature prophesied some catastrophic happening. There must come some change, some terrible altering in the scheme of things. Then by way of anticlimax, I was born.

The frame house in which I entered our atmosphere stood on the westernmost exposure of Omaha. One of my earliest recollections was of the house trembling under violent pressure of the wind which came to us unimpeded from wide plains. I had infused in me at that time a lingering fear of wind. And it has been my lot later to undergo almost every type of storm short of the Australian willy-willy. I have been unhealthily near to the center of two tornadoes. My little ship has been all but sunk by a sirocco on the Adriatic. I have known personally the inner workings of two hurricanes and once, as a member of the col-

legiate crew of the *Cockrobin*, I was unwittingly blown across Lake Michigan in an astounding nine hours. Enough of this wind.

The plains, over which the winds roared, were only partially fenced in 1891. The few railroads laid through the range land had not yet greatly promoted agriculture. The drover's road from the open ranges to the rail head in South Omaha led directly under my nursery window. I can still remember the crowds of tired cattle or restless horses passing in dust. It was in many ways significant to me that I was born on this very edge of frontier. Later I was to camp on cattle ranges of desert Colorado, to sleep fitfully while coyotes made melancholy over my night fire. My costume, my grub, the day's work, the coyotes at night and the wide expanses were somehow never strange to me, for I was suckled on descriptions of the cattle country. Mother was once well known for her literary descriptions of range land and of the breaking of the sod. I was, in a manner of speaking, another son of the Middle Border.

Although I left Omaha at the age of five, I remember some highly important facts of that city. For example, I have complete recollection of a square trash box with a hinged lid that stood by the alley. I found it a good place to hide until my older brother invented a story of how two pleasant people, Mr. and Mrs. Peattie, were walking past an alley. They heard a baby's cry and discovered the child in an ash can. This miserable infant they took home and named Roderick. Another memory was of the spiral staircase in the *World-Herald* office where my father was editor. And I cannot forget the wonderful and exciting odor of clothing in Browning, King and Company. It was there that I got my first trousers after graduating from kilts. There were some very important events in those early days, as when Mother and I kicked a tin can down the

middle of the street for two blocks. Once my sister Barbara picked forbidden violets in Hanson Park. At that moment the shadow of the penitentiary fell over me. Blinded by tears of fear I ran down a path into the arms of a benevolent policeman. Then my brother Edward had a friend whose father had made him a beautiful ship model. This was important. I thought a great deal about this ship. One birthday I received a cardboard model of the battleship *Columbia* with detachable lifeboats. It was on the bureau in my hall bedroom when I awoke the morning that marked the beginning of my fifth year.

Well, these were my first impressions of my wide, beautiful world. For me they were sufficient intellectually since I was not precocious. I was, indeed, a rather dirty little boy, but I was said to be beautiful and with a fine head of curls. To prove my one-time beauty I have a photograph of myself at a tender age, naked but with an unnecessarily large bunch of grapes to hide my tiny loins. If I was beautiful, I was dumb. I did not speak a word beyond "early English" before I was three. Then I was discovered standing in a corner and laconically saying, "book." This was because I habitually carried about with me a salmon-colored volume entitled *Nihilism As It Is*.

I was born within sight of the poorhouse. It stood directly on the horizon in the path of the setting sun. Now after travels on three continents my bewildered journey seems to have brought me not far from the point of starting. But there was yet greater significance to the site of my nativity. I was born in a city which in the 1890's was an outpost of the hopeful and often vulgar American culture of the period. Almost literally, Omaha was the rail head for late Victorianism; beaded curtains, iron dogs, culture clubs, and all that. In those days the theater was to an astonishing degree the distributor of ideas and conven-

tions. This was the period when Effie Ellsler was playing in *Hazel Kirke*. James O'Neill was beginning his years of *The Count of Monte-Cristo*. Father used to tell how Miss Ellsler in *Hazel Kirke* returned during the storm calling, "Father, Father," and how Couldock as her father, in a stage set which was strange to him, called back: "I'm coming! I'm coming, if I can ever find this damned door."

If our house was at the edge of this outpost of culture it also stood exactly on the margins of the frontier. Already the cattlemen and herders had spread as far as the Sierras. My period in Nebraska was that of the breaking of the sod. I belonged chronologically if not heroically to the period of *Old Jules*. The local drama had a strange cast of characters. It was boom country and one by one the characters or their acts were paraded before my young parents who were editors of Senator Hitchcock's *World-Herald*. To their office came tales of hope and despair, of frontier gallantry or frontier fraud. Their diaries of these days are filled with stories of humanitarianism maintained in the face of titanic struggle and of the greed of men confronted with a continent not yet despoiled of its wealth. I was still too toddling to be interested in much more than a rag doll named Susianna which I dragged about by one leg. But in these days my parents were playing roles and acquiring philosophies which were to become the background of my cultural inheritance.

Both of my parents were of pioneer stock, as I shall tell you later. My grandfather on my mother's side journeyed from St. Joseph on the Missouri to Pikes Peak, Colorado, by oxcart. Let me date that for you. Once Grandfather Wilkinson was camping alone by his fire on the plains. He heard the staccato hoof beats of the pony express, jumped up, and shouted to the messenger, "Who's elected?"

"Lincoln," the man shouted back, and roared away into the night.

With pioneer courage bred in them, no obstacle seemed too great for Robert Burns and Elia Wilkinson Peattie. They made light of hardship and took every advantage of chance. They had spring in their steps and light in their eyes. True to the sentimental traditions of their period, on their tombstones, which stand strangely enough in a little mountain town in North Carolina, is engraved "Wit, Journalist and Gentleman Unafraid" and "She ate of life as 'twere a fruit."

There was one catastrophe that all but floored my parents. This was the accident of my birth. In short, the nurse cost seventy-five dollars. But Mother had always a way of defeating ill fortune. The nurse proved to be a good storyteller. Out of her experience in the West Mother retold a tale, calling it *The Three Johns*, and sold it to *Harper's Weekly* for exactly the amount owed the nurse. Mother, after explaining to the editor how her confinement had slowed up her contributions, got a charming letter from him, saying that when the boy, meaning me, reached the age of twenty-one a job would be waiting for him if he, the editor, was still alive. The editor was Richard Harding Davis, but alas he was dead before I reached my maturity.

My father, as I knew him, must have been somewhat out of place in the rough West of the time. He was a delicate man, and yet these were the days when a crusading editor had to have physical courage. At least once his staff by their quick wit saved him from being shot. Father had a physique and a step which belied his Scotch ancestry. There was something French in his physical make-up and his mental attitudes. Mother once asked Grandmother

Peattie, née Betsy Culross, if there had not been a Frenchman wandering about the braes.

"Losh, lassie," replied my grandmother, "dinna be making fun aboot serioos matters."

I suspect that my father was one of the first Bohemians with any finesse to come to Omaha. It was he who established the first men's intellectual club in the city. His character was a combination of light and rapierlike wit, quite un-Scotch, and of great idealism. This latter quality frequently made him suffer when he was forced to make compromises. He was high-strung, like a finely bred horse, and quick of temper. This temper was one of my childhood fears.

My mother, too, was an organizer. She founded the first women's clubs in Nebraska, and in her role as feminist went about the state organizing and encouraging women in their careers. She once wrote up the work of a woman who was successfully breeding swine for stock purposes. Each boar and sow had its own name and well-cared-for stall and was brushed and curried like a racing horse. The woman was so pleased with the publicity that she asked Mother to return. After luncheon she took Mother to the stables.

"I have a surprise for you, Mrs. Peattie."

She showed Mother first a huge Poland China boar by the name of General Phil Sheridan. Then came its mate, a tremendous sow.

"Look," she said, "at the breadth between the flanks, the straight line along the back, at the . . ."

But Mother was looking at the brass name-plate above the pen. It read, "Elia W. Peattie."

Though this sod-breaking period in Nebraska was one of hope it also was one of struggle and disillusionment. In the eighties men had sold their farms in the East for thirty



and forty dollars an acre and had come West to homestead lands of waving grass and of great promise on the plains. Railroads and land speculators had encouraged the migration—and not without justification, for the land was good to look upon. About the time that the homesteaders arrived the rain began to wane, the shallow lakes to dry up, and the grass plants to become wider in their spacing. The first crop was not good. Men put more money into seed and doubled the plowed acreage. That year the crop was again a failure and the acreage was again doubled. Men were betting against loaded dice. The farm machinery was sold to buy range cattle. Then the cattle were sold to pay for transportation East. The railroad attempted to stop the flight by cruelly high return fares. But this fluctuating prosperity is fixed upon the plains by nature and will always be. The latest chapter is the story of the Dust Bowl.

It was in this period of alternate hope and despair that my people were serving the community. Father took part in a relief commission in 1895, which was investigating famine. Men were afraid of "hurting the state." One newspaper suggested hanging Father for telling the truth. In a much less worthy cause when I was grown an Oklahoma paper suggested my lynching, because of an article I wrote. But as a result of Father's good offices carloads of food and clothing came to Nebraska from all over the country.

Mother, moved to pity by the plight of the farmers, reached her height in creative writing (much of her later writing was critical) and produced *Jim Nancy's Waterloo*. It is found today in a volume entitled *A Mountain Woman*. The Populist Party, which arose in protest against the government and aridity, made a million reprints of the story and distributed them as propaganda. The tale runs:

"The heat of the summer was terrible. The sun came

up in that blue sky like a curse, and hung there until night came to comfort the blistering earth. And one morning a terrible thing happened. Annie was standing out-of-doors in the shade of those miserable oaks, ironing, when suddenly a blast of air struck her in the face, which made her look up startled. For a moment she thought, perhaps there was a fire near in the grass . . . Another blast came, hotter this time, and fifteen minutes later the wind was sweeping straight across the plain, burning and blasting. Annie went into the house to finish her ironing, and was working there when she heard Jim's footstep on the door-sill. He could not pale because of his tan, but there was a look of agony and of anger in his eyes. Then he looked for a moment at Annie standing there working patiently and rocking the little cradle with one foot, and he sat down on the doorstep and buried his face in his brown arms. The wind blew for three days. At the end of that time every ear was withered in the stalk. The corn crop was ruined."

Well, all this broke Annie. She took her child and went East, not because she did not love Jim, but to save her body, and perhaps her soul. The farm and all the furnishings were auctioned off.

"Two months later, a 'plain drunk' was registered at the station in Nebraska's metropolis. When they searched him they found nothing in his pockets but a silver thimble, and the policeman . . . gave it to the matron, with his compliments. But she went softly to where the man was sleeping, and slipped it back into his pocket with a sigh. For she knew somehow—as women do know things—that he had not stolen that thimble."

Jim Nancy stood for thousands of discouraged, disheartened men. Terrible and stirring times! When in 1892 the Populist Convention occurred, Hamlin Garland, as a delegate from the Henry George and Single Tax factions,

stayed at our house. Instead of a speech, Garland read his powerful and propagandistic story, *The Lion's Paw*. The convention then became a world of applause. As the hall rang with cries of "Garland, Garland," an old man laid his head on his arms and cried. It was Garland's father. He cried not so much for joy at the occasion as for the labor and hopes he had put into the making of empire. The grim and determined life as told in *A Son of the Middle Border* was grand realism.

One great politician was forged in the crucible that was Nebraska. There was a position to be filled in Congress. Mr. Hitchcock told Mother and Father of a young lawyer in Lincoln who had a fine flow of words and might be suited for the position. He was brought to Omaha and that night the four of them went to hear Patti sing. After leaving the young man at his hotel, Hitchcock, in the cab, asked:

"What do you think of him?"

Mother replied, "He has the head of a Roman senator. He ought to have his profile on a coin."

She might have added, "A silver coin," for the man was William Jennings Bryan. The next day Mother wrote the first editorial for Bryan. (We used to have a book in the house inscribed to Mother as the "first Bryan man.") Bryan came to the office to thank her. He said he thought he would run on the matter of corrected tariffs. Mother explained that tariffs were of no concern to the high-plains farmer and suggested a talk with one of the editorial writers. This was a Mr. Tibbels, who was married to an Indian named Bright Eyes. Bryan asked Tibbels on what issue he should run. Tibbels struck his fist on the table and shouted, "Bimetallism!"

Bryan said, "What is it?"

American frontiers and Indians go together. Bright

Eyes was the daughter of the highly intelligent Standing Bear. Bright Eyes was a remarkable woman. She and her husband received great attention on their visit to Great Britain. In Boston she met Longfellow who said, "Ah! At last I meet my Minnehaha."

My brother Edward was invited to the Standing Bear home in the Pawnee Reservation. Mother and Father, who never side-stepped adventure, sent him where he rode ponies with the Indian boys all summer. At one time riding in an open wagon with the Tibbels family, he was saved from freezing during a "norther," but nearly suffocated in the blankets under their feet. The boy arrived back in Omaha after the summer—dirty, browned, hair uncut, clothes in tatters, but with imperishable stories. Bright Eyes visited our home many times. On one occasion just before sitting down she noticed a tack on the chair. (I was never a model boy.) All she said was, "If I had sat on that, there would have been another Indian uprising."

Mother once dined at the home of Chancellor Canfield of the University of Nebraska. At the dinner was his daughter Dorothy, already with literary promise. Mother and Dorothy Canfield were to meet years later at my farm in Vermont. But at that time in Lincoln another young woman was introduced, a student.

"This is our Willa Cather, from whom we expect big things."

Miss Cather, more than any one else, was to interpret Nebraska for me in her novels. In the opening of her *My Antonia* she says that the corn belt creates a free-masonry between men. J. Russell Smith in his *North America* comes splendidly to the same conclusion, apparently without having read Cather. To me, democracy typifies corn-belt society more than any other stratum in our country. And in spite of modern sophistication and the

growing urban character of the prairies and plains the freemasonry of democracy is still strongest in the Middle West. But in the days when Nebraska was still frontier—Garland's Middle Border—culture there was a strange mixture of pioneer crudity and the polite manners and amenities of the East. A large billboard bore witness to this. It pictured two gentlemen and a lady in evening dress, such as one might see at the opera in New York. The lady was introducing one gentleman to the other, and graciously saying with western frankness, "Meet Mr. Smith. He chews Nigger Hair Tobacco."

## II

### FATHER WAS A MUTANT

EVERY biographer has the task of weighing the relative importance of heredity and environment. No one is agreed upon how much of the mind may be inherited. Every one is convinced that cultural inheritance, that is, early environment, is important. But one can search almost in vain through Father's early life for congenital or environmental characteristics. He was psychologically most unlike his parents and was hardly at all a product of his environment. His boyhood was spent in a part of Chicago marked for its poverty of resource and ideas—literally the gas-house region. From the point of view of genetics Father was a mutant. His quality of mutation seemed to lift him above the setting in which he was reared. He was a sensitive child of slight build. He had a fine imagination and wistfulness which sent him out on a lifelong search for beauty and romance. I once read a wanderlust poem he wrote after prowling about New York harbor which helped me to understand him better. He was, like too many of us, held down by the prosaic.

Born of Scotch parents (very worthy people they were), Father had but one Scotch distinction. He was given to fits of melancholy—the Scotch call it dourness. Of course his people were Presbyterian. Father, on the other hand, was quite unchurchly. Though he was a man of strict

morals and uncompromising ethics, as an adult he never entered a church except for a wedding or a funeral. Once a man asked him where the Seventh Baptist Church was.

He replied quickly, "Heavens! I don't know where the first is yet."

A Mrs. Coonley Ward used to hold Sunday evening salons in her beautiful home at Number 2 Bank Street. During the course of the evening she would assign literary tasks to her guests. She asked Father to repeat the hundred and twenty-third Psalm.

He truthfully replied, "I didn't know they ran that high."

Father seemed totally to efface the influence of his early environment. He emerged from the sordid surroundings of his adolescence a connoisseur in matters of good taste. Through books he became a *boulevardier* without having been to Paris. When in later years he did go abroad he knew every street in London and Paris without a guide. He and I met in Brittany and immediately went to a café to talk matters over as men will. Forgetting for the moment that Father had always been a *bon vivant*, I suggested a certain wine as a choice introduction to French life. With what disgust he looked at me! He had known his wines before I was born.

My paternal grandparents were born in Fifeshire, Scotland, in 1812. I think my great-grandfather was a not unsuccessful salt smuggler. My grandfather, John Peattie, fell in love with the diminutive Betsy Culross. Betsy went to the Highlands as a lady's maid. Her mistress, noting that letters from John made the girl restless, intercepted and destroyed them. John, believing his suit discarded, up and wed *Highland Mary's* niece. Fortunately for me, the niece died and John sought out his first love. John had been apprenticed to a mechanic and finally became a jour-

neyman. He was an excellent workman and constructed and ran the first locomotive in Ayrshire—Robert Burns' country. His initiative and, indeed, his size brought him a foremanship in the shop of William Fairbairn in Manchester. Later he worked for James Nasmyth, and saw the young Victoria place her watch on an anvil beneath a steam hammer. The great hammer struck but was controlled just before it crushed the watch. John was more than a foreman. In the noon-hour discussions he was a leader. He was a Chartist when Chartism was forbidden. So great an admirer was he of the American scheme of things that he was dubbed "The Yankee."

Finally John's love of America prompted him to trek westward across the sea with his family. What a blow it was to his ideals, on landing in New York, to witness the brutal retaking of a slave! After an interlude at Nyack on the Hudson he and his wife and five children again joined the westward movement. The trip was by the Erie Canal to Buffalo and then by lake boat to New Buffalo, on the Indiana-Michigan line. New Buffalo was a miserable settlement, largely Indian. I came to know the town on college house parties. It consisted in my day of a single street between a half-dozen stores. The width of this avenue of sand testified to hopes that some day the town would surpass Chicago in size.

Eventually John and his family migrated to the poorest county in Wisconsin. Even today that county has but a single railway which enters one corner and leaves almost immediately, as if realizing its mistake. My grandfather built a sawmill and nearly cut off his foot with an adz. The tiny wife carried her six-foot man into the house and drove twenty miles for a doctor—an unrecorded heroism in the Epic of America. The mill was exchanged for a farm. On this farm Father was born in 1857. Out of loyalty he was



named Robert Burns Peattie, but his mother called him Burns.

The earliest memories of the young Robert Burns were poverty and news of the Civil War. John, an older brother, was of soldier age but did not go to war because of a bad eye. His failure to contribute to patriotism caused Betsy Culross to throw herself on the floor and weep. John then had to content himself with writing patriotic verses. A sheriff named Otterburn prevented the raising of a flag-pole on a Sunday. John's twenty stanzas of four lines beginning, "Go hide thy head, false Otterburn," were very popular and were much reprinted. But life on the farm was mostly uneventful and meager. Grandfather tilled, and mended machinery for the neighbors. He was also a coffin maker. Grandmother made her own soap, candles, vinegar, and "coffee" from burnt toast. The children went to the country school. Burns was precocious, and at five could read and knew excellently the old-fashioned place geography. He used to chant the capitals of the states in a singsong, "Maine, Augusta on the Kennebec River-r-r."

The farm was doomed to failure and John Peattie turned to his old trade. He went to Chicago to open a machine shop. There had been a wild pigeon which was wont to come to rest on Grandmother's shoulder as she was hanging out the wash. As if with understanding this pigeon followed the family to the railway station. The first time that Grandmother, in Chicago two hundred miles away, hung out the clothes, the pigeon fluttered to her shoulder. Later some boys stoned it and it disappeared, the last vestige of the unfortunate Wisconsin venture.

A shocking event to the family was the death of Lincoln. John Peattie was loyal beyond words to the Lincoln ideals. So strongly did he feel his sorrow that when one daughter said something disparaging about Lincoln she was

ordered from the house, never to return. My father was to have something of this quick, intolerant decision and I, alas, find that emotions also seize me against my reason. On Lincoln's death the city was draped in black, and a fortnight later the funeral cortège arrived. Young Burns was lifted by his father to see the dead face—the most interesting face in American history. Like so many others of the same generation it was the great moment in the youth of Burns. Another child, Louise White, was brought from Champaign, Illinois, to look upon the dead man's face. It was the daughter of Louise that I was to marry.

At this time Chicago was a sprawling city of 200,000 souls. Milwaukee in those days smiled at Chicago's pretensions. Cincinnati was already a great meat-packing center—Charles Dickens had called it "Porkopolis." I have been told that the word Chicago means "skunk cabbage"—an onionlike weed that still grows about on the prairies. It was well named, for the city was odoriferous. Gutters overran with offal and garbage. Cattle and hogs were kept within the city. They were fed partly on malt and waste from the distilleries, the evil-smelling stuff slopping from the barrels as it was carried about in great, two-wheeled carts. Few streets in the city were paved. Mud holes were everywhere. One on Washington Street had a sign, "No Bottom." Milk was delivered in huge, unclean cans. Bakers' goods were sold from wagons. Gas lighting was found only in the well-to-do or commercial sections of the city. Kerosene lamps served most houses. The favorite dwelling was a two-storied cottage with a high basement in which were located the dining room and kitchen, and there was an outside stairs before the cottage which led up to the parlor and the bedrooms.

Dad used to tell a story about one of these stairways. Each newspaper sent a reporter to the hotels to list the

arrivals. Actually the reporters loafed in a saloon while one of their number made the rounds. One night their favorite barkeeper got drunk, and a reporter volunteered to take him home. The hack finally pulled up before one of these prairie cottages. The drunk insisted upon negotiating the snowy steps alone. He got part way up, slipped down, and sitting on the sidewalk said remorsefully, "And you a friend, and ye tripped me."

Actually Chicago was in a state of metamorphism in my day. I lived in the suburbs and remember the gutter drainage, the out-of-doors privies, the cesspools, and the stagnant green swamps in the vacant lots. There were still cottages with outside staircases. Horse cars and cable cars were in use. In my time there were more sailing ships than steamships on that open sewer known as the Chicago River. One branch of the river, on which for some forgotten reason I took a launch trip, consisted of liquid mud made up of offal from the stockyards.

John Peattie was a successful engineer; his shop turned out engines of distinction. Living near the shop meant living in a tough neighborhood. Father insisted that many of his boyhood gang became criminals. Years later, he met one of these in the street.

"Well, Joe," he said, "you and I are about the only ones who kept out of the penitentiary."

"Speak for yourself," replied Joe.

After Father became a newspaper editor some of the old gang would come to the office to report a funeral or a fight. They identified themselves by addressing Father by the boyhood name of Burns. But Father had trouble remembering them. One such fellow said sadly, "Burns, Jim is dead. He asked that you be a pallbearer."

"Indeed," said Father, not remembering Jim from Adam. "Where did Jim live when he died?"

"Oh, the same old place."

Father finally obtained the address. He took a streetcar to the outskirts of Chicago, to a place he had never seen before. Jim's friends and family all seemed strangers to him. Jim's mother wept on his shoulder. Jim's sister did likewise—which was better. Then they asked if Father would like to have a last look at Jim. "You bet your life I would," thought Father. No memories were stirred by the sight of the dead face, and Jim was laid away as part of a forgotten interlude.

The young Robert Burns went to school with a rabble, mostly Catholics. Being about the only Protestant in the school he was pummeled on all occasions until the local bully to please his own egotism took Burns under his protection. Finally Father was made treasurer of the ball club "because he looks so honest." Picture the young, sensitive Burns, slight of build and fervent with imagination, in this environment. On the way to school he passed two famous brothels that proclaimed themselves to all by a brass "Madame" plate on the door. One Madame was the notorious Carrie Watson. Her relatives cast her off, but when on her death an immense fortune was disclosed the relatives made fervent claims of blood in their wild scramble for the inheritance. How Maupassant would have loved that!

The schools to which Robert went were the worst in the world. As an educator I am glad to know that some students are able to withstand our systems without complete loss of individuality. But Robert, even at a tender age, had rebellion in him. He must have been a recreant student. One day he came home to tell his mother that he had received two demerits. Thinking they were prizes, she smiled proudly.

"Hoot, laddie," she said, "show them to me."

The school buildings were stark and ugly, too old to be

kept clean. Disfigured desks and bad-smelling varnish. No pictures, no flowers, no cheerfulness! After ending a year in which every morning was opened by the teacher with a lugubrious *Nearer, My God, to Thee*, Father was promoted a grade only to have the teacher who was so near to God go up, too. Mathematics meant nothing to the sensitive, romantic boy. In fractions he found no heroes or heroines. His youngest child, Donald, was in time to be graduated from Harvard *cum laude* with a failure in math. Robert's sister Tina, who became a schoolteacher, was some help to him in math. Of literature the whole family had an innate appreciation. One day his father's face paled as he was reading the newspaper.

"What is it, John?" his wife asked.

"Dickens is dead," was the heavy reply. It was as if a member of the family had gone.

In the home library there were possibly two hundred books, some of Dickens, some Scott, Bulwer-Lytton's *Rienzi*, the poems of Burns (which my grandfather knew by heart), Campbell, Byron, Mrs. Hemans, and Shakespeare in one volume which would have delighted an optician. But then there came the important cellar discovery. In the cellar of a deserted house the boy made two finds. One was a single ice skate upon which he used to pump along the frozen ditches. But more important were three moldy volumes: *Les Misérables*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Toilers of the Sea*. What a treasure trove! His first books to own! The family was for destroying the filthy volumes—but there were tears, and the mold was baked off in an oven and the books preserved.

On October 8, 1871, when our young hero was fourteen, a great fire developed in the southwest section of the city. The next day the flames leapt the river but as yet the people on the North Side were not unduly alarmed. Rob-

ert and his mother went to church and heard the minister pray in a remote sort of way for the homeless. The following morning the household was awakened by Sister Lizzie calling that the people were fleeing the city. The streets were jammed. Young Burns ran some blocks for a buggy which he forced back against traffic with himself between the shafts, but had to abandon because of the tide of people. Every one was carrying goods. All carts were piled high with goods. Women and children were crying for one another in the surging crowd. Young men friends of the Peattie family appeared with a cart and saved some of their household goods, but not the three volumes of Victor Hugo. Grandfather disappeared to save some patterns from the shop. His wife and son waited for him. He returned only as the neighboring houses were aflame. Then the three fled, the little mother carrying a birdcage from which the bottom had dropped out and the bird escaped.

At Brother John's house they stopped long enough to bury some goods in a pit in the yard. The sky was lurid and the air filled with smoke. The noise was appalling. Embers were carried by the fire-made wind to ignite houses far beyond the main conflagration. Once again flight, this time to the margin of the city. My father awoke next morning to hear the blessed rain upon the roof. John Peattie and his young son went back that morning into the strange, dead city. The heat and the smoke almost barred the way. Their shoes were burnt by the still hot pavement. They found thousands of refugees in Lincoln Park, many of whom had spent the night chin-deep in the lagoons and in the lake—this in October. With landmarks gone the Peatties had difficulty in finding the homesite. When they came to it their next-door neighbor was standing in his yard.

"Well, John," he said, "today we are all reduced to the same level."

At that moment the roof of the cesspool on which he was standing gave way and he sank into the loathsome vault.

In 1872 Robert entered the city's only high school, earning three dollars a week by distributing one hundred and twenty evening papers daily over a five-mile route, which gave him his book money. School was a bore. The teachers, never helpful, were brutally sarcastic. "Why, even Peattie knew that!" came from his Latin teacher. In a New England boarding school my Latin teacher was to address me with those same words. The algebra teacher would become infuriated at the class and sneer, "Well, who was the father of Zebedee's children?" Father, exasperated, finally replied, "Oh, go ask Mrs. Zebedee." He was sent to the principal's office, where he found a good deal of sympathy. Father gave up school before the year was over. What crimes against youth these teachers committed! Father had a scholarly mind, if I ever met one. I can remember his delight years later as we read Virgil together in the original.

An habitually drunken sailor who was a friend of the family, taking a fancy to young Robert, took the boy to a bookstore and bought him a volume entitled *Self-Help*. The store to which they went proved to be that of the Western News Company. Robert's eyes were opened by the rows upon rows of books, and he then and there decided that this was the place where he was going to work. Soon he was employed in the wrapping room, for most of the business was by mail. It was like heaven, this handling of books. The inquisitive youth peeped into every volume he wrapped. At eighteen he was promoted to the bookstore.

The employer was a slave driver, given to great fits of temper. His clerks were cowed. He once vented his rage on Peattie, who had no mean temper of his own. The man who was used to servile obedience was abashed at Peattie's

reply. He marched off to his office to sulk the rest of the day. Peattie took his hat and left.

Shortly our young man was doing routine work in the business office of the *Times* and dreaming of the day when he would be a reporter. Night after night he hung about the city room, hoping for a news assignment. His perseverance won him a chance to report a Republican meeting in the Fourteenth Ward. The speeches were, in fact, veritable blah, of whence Father attempted to make a verbatim report. During the meeting there was a disturbance when two policemen entered to arrest a murderer. Father got the facts.

When the young hopeful returned to the office the city editor appeared to have forgotten him. The youth laid the long report on the desk and the editor let out a guffaw. Then seeing that the young man was hurt, he read the stuff, extracted the murder story and published it, thereby making him a full-fledged reporter.

The journalistic career of Peattie had not proceeded far when a great event took place. At a dance on the West Side, Peattie took notice of a young, tall and slender girl. She was pretty, but it was the intensity with which she regarded people that first attracted him. She had come to the dance with some young man but afterward was unable to remember whom. Peattie took her home. Soon he was offering her the most precious gifts of which he knew—books. I have a record of these gifts. In no better manner could I describe the sentimentality and charm of this Victorian and victorious wooing than to list them. They were: Owen Meredith's *Lucile*, Blanche Willis Howard's *One Summer*, Curtis's *Lotus-Eating* and Warner's *My Summer in a Garden*. All of which brings me to the story of my mother.



### III

#### MOTHER WAS A REBEL

MOTHER was little like Father, different in environmental background and very different in temperament. Father was overly modest and diffident. He became extrovert only as his ideals were offended or as he saw a chance for witticism. He was a most charming dinner partner. Mother was always the extrovert. She loved the center of the stage, thrived on praise and appreciation, would have had the greatest satisfaction in being well-to-do and played, whenever she could, the role of fine lady.

Her own father had illusions of grandeur. He was always building large wooden houses far beyond his means and with entrance halls incongruous with his simple life. He had the estate complex. All his five children and even his grandchildren had a touch of it, but we also had a saving sense of humor about what we call the Wilkinson grandeur. In Mother this egotism was pleasant and, in reality, carried her far. But Mother's success and enjoyment in social leadership must at times have been a burden to Father, who by nature was too self-effacing. Only once did Father make open remonstrance against Mother's conspicuous achievements. The chairman, in introducing Mother as a lecturer, referred to her writings and also to her four other "works"—her children.

Father rose quickly in the audience and proclaimed, "I

demand recognition as a collaborator." But if Mother loved fine living she also had a pioneer talent and ingenuity for making a charming home out of relatively little. In her zest for life she never missed an opportunity to be happy.

Mother was a most devout American. She was by one line of descent the tenth generation on our soil. Whereas I do not even know the name of my paternal great-grandfather, there are whole genealogies of my mother's ancestry, cluttered up with revolutionary soldiers. Much to the family's amusement and Mother's delight she became a Colonial Dame. Father dashed out and bought her an ermine scarf, saying that all Colonial Dames *must* have a bit of ermine. Prestige from forbears could never mean anything to Father, but they meant a great deal to Mother.

Mother's ancestral story in America begins in Vermont, strangely enough where I may spend my last days. There one of the Marsh family of Burlington caught the westward fever and set out for Cleveland, Ohio, taking along a young nephew who was recovering from typhoid fever. As the boat docked at Cleveland the boy could not be found. Actually he was asleep in a coil of rope on the deck. Marsh was forced to sail on with the boat until it stopped at Detroit. It was because of this that my ancestors were middle Michiganders.

Well, Mother's people cleared forest, plowed virgin soil, and grew up with the country. One branch of the family was named Ransome. One pioneer Ransome died while his wife was still young. The wife made out by renting the farm and by sewing for the neighbors. She had a fine sense of hospitality, and no one beset along the way, peddler or Indian, was refused shelter.

One night the widow returned from work on a wedding outfit to find her cabin burned to the ground and the

children weeping. They all slept in the forest that night. Next morning, from all directions, came men bearing axes. A new house was built, and every woman within miles contributed some household article. The peddlers, learning of the misfortune, turned from their routes to leave some bit of tinware. The Indians came to sit on the doorstep and fashion moccasins for the children. This is a grand piece of Americana which should be recorded.

All this has concerned my mother's maternal inheritance. Grandfather Wilkinson was born in Birmingham, England, and was brought to this country by an American enthusiast. Wilkinson got about. He visited the Seminole Indians in Florida when this was mysterious territory. He distributed Bibles among the Lake Superior Indians to earn money for two years at the University of Michigan, and obtained a degree from a law school in Kalamazoo. There he met a young woman who was engaged to a Canadian. The Canadian released her with words that bespoke the gallantry of the times, as he quoted from *Hamlet*, "To thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man." Stout fellow! Good old boy! One must admit that the British have code.

The marriage of Frederick Wilkinson and Amanda Maria Cahill was not brought about immediately, for Wilkinson was a poor man. News of gold at Pikes Peak! He stayed in the West for some time but accumulated only about two thousand dollars. "Ol' Abe's first call for troops" drove the idea of personal gain out of his head. With a company of gallant men he sped back across the plains to enlist. There was a sudden marriage and his bride stayed with him three weeks while he drilled in a Detroit cantonment. My mother, Elia, was conceived at that time and was not to see her father until she was three years old. In 1917, it was just three weeks that my bride and I were together

while I was in training. I saw my boy for the first time on his first birthday.

After three years of fighting under McClellan and Grant, Fred Wilkinson was wounded in the head. We used to have his cap, with the company letter shot away. He lay in a hospital in Alexandria, Virginia, near where I made military maps in a later war. Wilkinson's negro servant sold his master's sword and sash and with the money got the sick man home. As a reward the negro was later set up in the milling business. Wilkinson had the equivalent of shell shock. For months afterward he would have periods of going about moaning, "The horrible battlefields. The horrible battlefields." He never again had complete health and bore with him always an irascibility resulting from shattered nerves.

The best of Elia's early impressions are recorded for us in her *Painted Windows*. The child was all fancy and imagination. The truth was not real, and the only reality was in her now blithe, now melodramatic, little person. She was lonely. She was misunderstood. It was, "Elia, get some wood for the fire!" "Elia, put your sisters to bed!" "Elia, weed the pansies." No one turned down her sheets. No one offered to bring her tea. No one—never anybody—laid hand on her head and said, "Bless you, my child, you have done excellently and deserve the highest reward!"

In such dark and unappreciated mood she went to school. Then in the round of unendurable monotony something did happen. A great deal happened. A black and roaring cloud rose up like a genie—a tornado struck the schoolhouse. The teacher had the presence of mind to catapult her charges into the yard. Scattered about on the ground the children were beaten down by the wind and the terrific rain. Bruised, and bones broken, but none seriously

hurt, they submitted to the elements. Then parents began to appear. Parents running, parents on horse, parents dressed, parents in Mother Hubbards, each seeking a bedraggled child. Elia remembered her mother's frantic approach. Then her father's arms as he carried her home, her mother following with the negro servant. Now all this has not to do with a tornado but with a glorious revelation. It appears that Elia was loved by both her parents and by the negro servant, and even by her sisters and the family cat.

Very impressive was another adventure: her night in the woods. Elia was not well. She was pale and losing weight. So it was decided by her father that she was to take a fortnight's trip with him while he was concerned with certain collections and credits. Fred Wilkinson was used to taking care of himself under most primitive conditions, but it was Elia's first life in the rough. Seated high in the cart, her little feet on her tiny Saratoga trunk, she adventured from town to town with her father. They slept at inns and in the lean-tos of cabin farmhouses. But once on a short cut through the woods darkness found them hopelessly mired. With difficulty they unhitched and extracted the horse from the mud. Then with only some old army blankets they bivouacked in the deep forest. At first it seemed the realm of wolves and even of Indians. But soon confidence was born of the direct manner in which her father, old campaigner that he was, went about making camp. Of all Mother's colorful life, which as a young woman took her over a raw continent from Jamaica to Alaska, this was her greatest adventure.

Elia remembered her young mother as shy and proud, sensitive and lacking in self-expression. As with all pioneer women there were too many periods of pregnancy. My

mother was followed by Kate, Gertrude, Bertha and, twenty years after Mother, by Hazel. There was one boy who died as a baby. He was buried down where the sorrel grew. Little Elia thought it was "sorrow." In the Victorian household it was always the male who was intellectually superior, though Fred Wilkinson loved his wife dearly.

I can still remember him calling as he came into the house, "Where's Mother?" Amanda was profoundly content. But you know how it is, one must not expect too much from a woman. Even at an early age Elia, their first-born, had intuition or logic that would not permit her to accept untruths. I have often wondered if it was not the falsity of her father's superiority over her mother that later led Elia to the role of feminist.

Conversation at Grandfather's was concerned with the price of butter, high taxes and other such homely and degrading subjects. Only when her uncle, Judge Edward Cahill, came, was there any literary flavor to their talk. The family's poverty precluded the purchase of books or magazines but there was a collection of volumes left over from her father's college days. The titles were: *An Illustrated History of the Civil War*, *Josephus* bound in calf, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, Baxter's *Saint's Everlasting Rest*, Zimmermann's *On Solitude*, and other equally durable and tough pieces of reading. Little Elia, resting the books on her inadequate lap, read them all; but Zimmermann was most to her liking. From her uncle, however, came acquaintance with Shakespeare. Elia memorized many great and weighty selections. Then two important events coincided. Elia received a new green dress and she was selected to make a recitation at an important Sunday school event. Unbeknown to the teacher, little pigtails selected her own piece. She would walk down the lane practising:

I am dying, Egypt, dying!  
Ebbs the crimson life tide fast,  
And the dark Plutonian shadows  
Gather on the evening blast;

and then in her high voice:

And for thee, star-eyed Egyptian—  
Glorious sorceress of the Nile!—  
Light the path to stygian horrors  
With the splendor of thy smile;

Somehow the teacher failed to associate Elia with Antony, and suggested that, anyway, the selection was over the heads of the audience. The teacher pulled down a volume of Whittier—there were violets pressed between the leaves—and finally the girl learned:

### THE PUMPKIN

O,—fruit loved of boyhood!—the old days recalling,  
When wood-grapes were purpling and brown nuts were  
falling!

The day came for the recital. With knees knocking, but bravely in the new dress, Elia spoke. She must not forget. She heard her own voice remotely, impersonally. She was begging Egypt to take her in her arms. In spite of the grins on the faces of the elders who faced her, she went on strewing wrecked galleys on "dark Actium's fatal shore." There was what seemed to Elia thunderous applause, so by way of encore she gave Whittier's sonnet to the pumpkin. Such was the little girl whose deep imagination was not to be denied. The child skipped along through life always with high expectations that something wonderful was about to happen.

Elia grew apace. The family moved to Chicago where

Wilkinson did poorly at law and so opened a print shop. It stood where Madison Street meets the river. Elia, now fourteen, set type. She did not attend school after the seventh grade. But this working in the print shop fixed in the girl a sense of spelling, punctuation and paragraphing that in later years was to serve her well.

So father and daughter each day walked miles to work, carrying with them cold luncheons. On the way home they bought vegetables and cheap meats and waited to have them cooked. They were so poor that Elia was unable to go to the evening parties given by the Sunday school of which her father was superintendent. Then rebellion! Finally an inexpensive gown was contrived. It was of a robin's-egg-blue design on a tan ground. The spindle-legged child said to the head printer, "Now that my outfit is complete, I shall be swallowed up in the vortex of society." Could any one doubt that here was literary talent?

A great event, an uplift from grey monotony, was when her father bought her a piano. But payments on it could not be met. She came home one day to find it gone. There were bitter tears, and another one was promised. For months the heartbroken girl would say to herself as she trudged the long walk home, "When I open the door it will be there." But it never was. Her father hired a tutor in elocution. Before the lessons were finished there was again not enough money. The girl was mortified. She took to making "fascinators" on a piecework basis and earned enough to complete the lessons. Later she became one of the leading women lecturers of Chicago.

The Cahills in Chicago were distinguished. The Wilkinsons were their poor relations. Many of Mother's relatives, living in a fashionable part of the South Side, took little notice of her. This was not true of Mary Walker,



a member of the clan. She showed Elia not condescension but kindness. Mary was the impressionable girl's heroine. Mary had a tutor for every interest. She was absorbing languages and art appreciation with avidity. But Mary's wealth and culture tormented Elia with her poverty and lack of social experience. It was Grandmother Cahill who took her on visits to the Walker home, partly to demonstrate to the girl the ineffectiveness of her father to provide a fuller life. What a training for rebellion!

Elia's great struggle was with her father. In truth they loved each other; but Elia from the beginning had little of the Puritan in her. Rather she had a capacity for gaiety which made her in later years the happiest sort of playmate for her children. It is such an inheritance that has made the Reformation seem to me one of the least pleasant periods of history. Now Grandfather had a bad case of Puritanical Victorianism—a deadly sort of virus. He was outraged when the eager but awkward girl went to Sunday school parties where dancing was permitted.

On one such occasion the youngsters were to wear masks. Wilkinson ranted and raged. All his efforts to raise his daughter in the ways of righteousness had been in vain. The whole family was now headed for perdition and so he gave up asking blessing at the table or saying family prayers. A fine case of pious hysterics. But the little rebel saw no relation between the abolition of family prayers and the neighborhood party. The girl's mother agreed with her, but cautiously. Elia went to the party and danced happily if somewhat badly. Next morning she was back in the print shop, trying to feel repentant; but she was really happy. The only loss was a parent fallen from a pedestal. It was, as you know, at such a dance that she met my father.

As the wooing proceeded, the romantic volumes as pres-

ents were followed by volumes of Humboldt, Spencer, and Darwin. Things were getting serious—almost biological. Grandfather wanted to know where this young fellow got so much money to waste on books for women. Reporters were supposed to be loose fellows. It would be better if the young man were getting ten dollars a week on a “steady” job. The suitor was bringing unorthodox theories into the house. Moreover, he was shameless, frivolous, too fashionably dressed, and was consistently singing songs from light operas, *Patience*, *The Chimes of Normandy*, and *Manon*. It was not only love that the young man brought, but liberation from circumstance, and laughter in the place of poverty. He opened rooms of knowledge, amusement, and creativeness. He encouraged rebellion against monotony and Puritanism. After six years, the two were married in 1883.

Robert in a characteristic moment of extravagance paid the minister fifteen dollars and rented a cab to take them home. They arrived at the little cottage on the North Side with five cents surplus. That evening they were so aghast at being alone that they went next door to ask the neighbors to come and sit with them.

In the new house Mother made her first of a series of revolts against ugliness. The cottage had been Grandmother Peattie's and had all the severe plainness of a Scotch peasant. One of those irregular checks arrived that always marked Mother's life, so before Grandmother returned there were art draperies, Japanese fans and parasols, the kitchen sink was painted black, and the grey tone of the place was turned to yellow and green. Colored glass (it was probably horrible) hid the ugly view outside; a garden was planted, and white latticework constructed. I suspect there were hollyhocks before the door. Love in a cottage, decorated in the best manner of Oscar Wilde that the

meager pocketbook could achieve. The first two years brought the appeasement of the old Scotch mother and the birth of Edward Graham and—fourteen months later—of Barbara Culross. Edward later changed his name to Cahill because he thought Graham sounded too much like a cracker.

Both wife and husband were teeming with ideas. Once the children were in bed, the two planners wrote short stories together, modeled frankly after the French and English masters. The stories sold. Then Mother, who knew nothing about art or society, was asked to do both for the *Chicago Tribune*. Robert and Elia shook the cottage with laughter over Mother's new role. Mother was probably the worst society editor ever known in Chicago. But this experience gave her deep knowledge of art and a lifelong friendship with many Chicago artists. Later Mother became the second woman reporter in Chicago. Among the friends that Mother and Father shared were Edward McPhelim, the great and almost legendary newspaper man of the early days, Harry B. Smith, the librettist, and Eugene Field, the beloved poet. Through interviews Mother came to know Ellen Terry, Emma Goldman, the playwright and actor Dion Boucicault, and many others. Mother asked Boucicault if he had known Dickens.

"He was my very good friend," was the reply. "I lunched with him the day before his death. He was greatly bothered about his new book *Edwin Drood*, for he had inadvertently killed the hero. He did not feel badly about this as Jasper was a bad hero, but he had to dispose of the body. He could hide it in a vault in the cathedral, throw it in the river, or put it in quicklime. Dickens asked me to have luncheon with him the next day and help him think the thing out." But the next day Dickens was dead.

Mother had a stormy encounter with Annie Besant, the

theosophist. A more sympathetic interview was with Mrs. Stetson, the Christian Scientist. There was an interview with John Alexander Dowie, the faith healer, in his early days. Dowie was then short, fat and self-hypnotized. Without a flicker of an eyelash he called himself the Medium of his Creator. We all know how he finally came to have a city of his own north of Chicago where, a large man with flowing white hair, he amazed his audiences by the pontifical roll of his voice, his prophecies, prayers, cursings and praises.

Mother had little sympathy with emotional religion and fear. She once visited a revival meeting conducted by a Mr. Woodbridge. He was a spellbinder, and she heard him drag hundreds of little children through his own particular kind of hell-fire. He implored them to come to Jesus, now, now, NOW, before it was too late. The children were, of course, badly frightened. Mother wrote him up for what he was worth, and he fled the city the next morning. In Omaha there was a boom on spiritualism. Mother went to a séance and made a grab for the spirit. It turned out to be the medium, with her petticoat thrown over her head. The faithful were furious, but that did not prevent Mother from publishing the truth the next day in the paper.

So our little rebel had grown into a scoffer of false convention and superstition. She accepted no emotional beliefs that lacked foundation. She did not even accept defeat. One time a very important person, some species of royalty, was visiting Chicago. Mother and a group of men reporters went to the Grand Pacific Hotel for an interview. On attempting to leave they found their way blocked by the police. Exit was impossible because of the crowds before the door. It was time for the papers to go to press. Mother wandered along a second-story corridor and saw a sign, "Baggage Chute." She jumped into the chute, was hurled

down, exploding through some doors, to find herself sitting rather far from the building in an alleyway. The girl who was always shaping her own destiny had scooped the city.

Mother was best known to the city of Chicago as literary critic of the *Tribune*. For many years she had a strong influence upon the literary taste of a wide public. But times changed. A younger set began to take hold of things and to rebel against what they looked upon as Victorian sentimentalism. A new morality came into literature. Mother's last stand was, perhaps, when she referred to Theodore Dreiser as a "literary tomcat." Among those in revolt was the young Margaret Anderson, editor of the *Little Review*. This publication was given over to free verse.

One contributor was an unknown Sade Iverson, who seemed to be a little milliner. Apparently her shop was on one of those interminable streets like Archer Avenue or Halsted Street. Sade never gave her address. The poems were the wistful thoughts of one who was always making gay hats for other people, giving beauty to occasions in which she could never share. Sade became more and more despairing as the months went by. The group that hung about the offices of the *Little Review* became worried about her. Max Bodenheimer wrote her a poem, which was published. There came a last effort, all this in free verse, which made her admirers fear that Sade was about to take her life. Desperately Miss Anderson and her group tried to get in touch with her to stave off impending suicide. Mother let them worry awhile and then walked into the office to announce herself as Sade Iverson.

## IV

### LIFE IN SHORT PANTS

MOTHER was a career woman. This did not mean that my ears were never washed, for at my entrance into this chaotic world my aunt Bertha came to live with us in order to dress me and scold me and, betimes, even to praise me. Bertha was a gentlewoman, but lived more by sentiment than by intellectuality. She seemed as much Mother's daughter as her sister. I loved her very much and called her my blue mother. I suppose my sister Barbara, six years my senior, took some care of me, for I remember backing up to her and presenting a bare bottom, and hearing her say, "No! I've been buttoning up your pants for six years, and I'm through!"

This was in an apartment building on the North Side of Chicago in a neighborhood between the Gold Coast and the warehouse area adjacent to the river. Near us was a colony of mansions belonging to the McCormicks. I was most impressed by these structures, especially by the regal ballroom in which I took my first dancing lessons. But my chief and exquisite architectural delight was a green stone church. When I failed to return from kindergarten I could be found sitting on a curb contemplating the serpentine monstrosity.

I suppose that I led a normal kid's life. I was chased from forbidden places. I always ran my hand along the railings,

and so was perpetually dirty. Between my brother and sister I rode proudly on the smallest bicycle in the world. I may have been good; but mostly I was bad. Mother had terrible, inhumane punishments for me. One was to stand me on the naughty spot—a place in the rug design. As long as I was there, I did not exist: I was invisible, untouchable, and of horrible inconsequence. I still have a fixation lest I become again so unimportant.

The chief memory of the flat on Erie Street was of the Cocoa Club. On winter afternoons Mother read to us by candlelight, with hot cocoa and crackers. A good many callers would drop in, but when the club was in session, regardless of the importance of the visitors, there was a demand for silence. I suspect that they secretly enjoyed *Treasure Island*, and *Lorna Doone*, and *Hans Brinker*, or *The Silver Skates*. How I wept over *A Dog of Flanders*! The only difference between club members and visitors was that the adults did not lie on the floor on their backs.

Life became more real for me when we moved to Windsor Park. The park belied its name, for it was a third-rate suburb lying between a prairie marsh and lake dunes. My parents moved out "for the children," and to take over the Beach House—the home of the Wilkinsons in their later Chicago days. Three of Mother's sisters were immediate neighbors. Hence there was a noisy army of cousins. During one of those backyard, around-the-bonfire conferences one lipping cousin enumerated the tribe: "Aunt Elia has four children, Aunt Gertie has three, Aunt Kate four, and Mother has *me*. Grandma's doing pretty well." All of which was better statistics than biology.

The various and sundry relatives had their separate characteristics—my three uncles, for example. We could see into Uncle George's dining room. There he would sit all evening with a cigar in his mouth and derby hat on his

head. He was an astute business man and played excellent poker. Uncle Wellington was a small quick man who argued over his superior way of living; for example, he used a superior shoe polish. He had once been a candy-maker, and his pulled taffy was a delight to me. Seasonally he raised a surplus of cucumbers which I peddled, much to my profit. His flower garden was invariably of salvias, asters and elephant's-ears. The third uncle was the boisterous husband of Bertha. He was a self-educated man, of English descent and American drive, and literally belabored me until I learned chess.

The cousins were all kinds—en masse invading the Myra Bradwell School. The Chicago school system had changed greatly since Father's day. Our school was bright, clean and well supplied with works of art. I was either willful or witless for I failed spelling in third grade.

Every Chicago child of my times remembers the Iroquois Theater fire. School children and their teachers had packed the house for a production of *Blue Beard*. The extravagant scenery was not fireproof, and within a few seconds the whole was aflame. Some of the exits were locked. The main doors swung inward, and near them the dead were piled to the ceiling, little things trying desperately to escape the flames. Close to six hundred people were killed, and it was Chicago's greatest tragedy. I had tried to get a ticket, but all were sold.

We lost five teachers, including a much-loved principal, and there was a common service for them all. The church was packed. Suddenly the house next door burst into flames. There was a sudden impulse to flee, but all remembered the fatal consequences of panic. As the firemen fought the blaze, the service went on.

I rechristened the old Beach House the House-Home. Room by room, it was rebuilt into something quite charm-



ing. Its high ceilings, elaborate moldings, and open fires gave it distinct character. As a Christmas surprise I stenciled, "Oh, Ye Fire and Heat, Bless Ye the Lord!" over one mantel. The house was in its entirety a library.

Father always held his early passion for books. Mother for years was a literary critic and kept many of the volumes that she reviewed. There were thousands of books. The library was lined with them. There were books on the stairways, in the halls, in the bedrooms, and in the attic. There were all kinds of books. *The Lives of the Saints* stood beside *The Lives of Twelve Bad Men*. *The Anatomy of Melancholy* was beside *Essays on Laughter*.

I devoured Dumas though I was confused that D'Artagnan should be in bed with Milady. I thought Sappho pretty fast going; by most standards, it still is. We had one excellent literary institution. Just outside the bathroom was a grouping of philosophical volumes. From it I read my Nietzsche and my classics (Bohn's Classical Library) comfortably seated. Years later with my best of friends, C. E. Andrews the critic, I planned a five-foot bookshelf for bathrooms, but our idea failed to attract nation-wide attention.

The house was too profusely furnished. It was in the school of decoration of William Morris and Oscar Wilde. There were lots of pictures; Burne-Jones and Rossetti. There was a large reproduction of "The Island of the Dead." The square piano supported a Winged Victory; and a bookshelf, the head of Dante. There were original drawings signed by the artists. Oriental rugs covered the floor, and the gas chandeliers were very elaborate with colored glass shields. There were too many chairs, and the tables were always piled high with books. A modern interior decorator would throw up his hands at the confusion, but I thought it was wonderful.

The guest book of the old House-Home contained many distinguished names. The literary and artistic life of the city, rich and poor, was represented. Many young persons who later won recognition were asked, by way of encouragement. Some of them lived with us for various periods. The gaiety and the wit, and the degree to which the conversation represented the pulse of the times, made me discontented with anything less in my adult years. But I was still in short pants, and mostly passed the cakes or sat on a stool and waited patiently for ice cream. Often I appeared under orders, grudgingly and incompletely washed, and present only in body. In spirit I was playing scrub football with the gang.

Much of the time, my brother Edward was away at school or working. I came to know him well only after we were adults. At home on vacations, he would look me over critically, and say: "Here's a quarter. Go get your hair cut." Even today as we meet his hand goes to his pocket, and I prevent his offering me a quarter by sheer force of will. The year Edward finished military school, we were particularly hard up. It was decided his military jacket could be made into a nice warm coat for me, and I daily had to wear the blamed thing into the school yard. It was shaped in at the waist, so my arrival was a signal for cries of "Here comes Corsets." It was the occasion of battles, most of which I lost. The only fight that was clearly in my favor was with my best friend, and it is possible that he pulled his punches.

My sister Barbara was a decided and happy influence on my early life. We loved each other dearly. She was a quaint little figure with thick glasses and, though not pretty, had a piquant charm that captivated every one. She was the most devout person I ever knew. Her seventeenth century *prie-dieu* was used with the devotion of a

nun. She wrote poetry and took to illuminating. Her Christmas cards became well known for their originality and beauty. One poem ran:

Rabboni, in the garden sweet,  
Kneel I enraptured at Thy feet.  
Thyself transfigured walkest here,  
Might such a change in me appear.

Shall death alone illumine me?  
Nay, Soul, that were a travesty.  
Only living man can praise,  
Then touch me with Thy living rays.

Her library was of choice, beautifully bound literary rarities. There was a spiritual fineness to her life that enfolded her like a cloud.

My young brother Donald was very skinny and quite philosophical from the first. He took up every faith but theosophy. He had a wonderful memory and a love of beauty which still marks his life. His childish recitation of Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* to the strains of Schubert's *Serenade* was exquisitely done. Doubtless he was a genius, but I thought him a nuisance.

Because of Don's health we traveled a good deal to escape extreme heat and cold, to northern Wisconsin, New England, Michigan, North Carolina, and Louisiana. My grandfather's place "Wildwood," outside South Haven, Michigan, was the scene of much happiness. One winter when we were ready to leave the Windsor Park house a pile of old boards in the basement got well ablaze before we knew it. It was eleven o'clock of a Saturday morning. Father, who worked nights, was asleep, and I was in the tub. Everybody else was semi-nude except my unmarried aunt Hazel. We had to flee precipitately across the snow.

The neighbors threw the books on the rugs and then carried them out.

Hazel did grand work. She carried the trunks down the narrow staircase. She—Hazel was fat—carried out the sewing machine. We had a two-storied colonial porch. The street was crowded with people. Hazel, triumphant, a Valkyrie, ran out onto the upper porch and with a soprano cry sailed her new and ample corsets out over the crowd. No Wagnerian fire-maiden ever got greater applause. With a gang of ruffians about me in a circle, Sister Barbara made me kneel and pray to God to quench the fire. Babbie was of the stuff of saints, and I loved her too much to refuse the gesture; but inwardly I cursed as the crowd danced up and down shouting, "Holy Gee, lookit the guy prayin'!"

Father when nervous used to roll cigarettes, light them and throw them away. Now, rolling a cigarette, he stepped up to a fireman desperately manning a hose. The flames blistered their faces. Quite unconscious of his wit, Father said, "Pardon me, have you a light?"

Hazel, our fat but fair heroine, after the fire went into the room above the kitchen to search for some jewelry. The floor boards gave, and Hazel straddled a beam. Practically all the local fire company was in the kitchen at the moment, and the sudden appearance of two fat legs, almost Heaven-sent, nearly wrecked the discipline of our fire-eaters. It turned disaster into high comedy.

We had one other fire. At Wildwood in the summer we lived in a single-roomed cabin. We children slept in sailors' hammocks. All ate, however, at the farmhouse. Returning after dinner, we thought we saw the sunset through the windows; but in reality the cabin was ablaze. It had in it a complete and accepted manuscript of one of Mother's novels: an only copy! She then rewrote the en-

tire book. Grandfather built a foolish wooden mansion in the woods, entirely inappropriate. He spent all his money on it. It burned. Otherwise all our houses have stood. I am left, however, with a strong dislike for burning houses.

My people decided that adolescence might come easier to me away from home. My sister Barbara had married into a most interesting family, well-to-do from carriage and wagon manufacture, and I had some fine visits to their ample home in Racine. One son, Ralph Erskine, had gone to Williams College, and on graduation went to teach at the near-by Hoosac School. Barbara became the new schoolmaster's bride. After finishing seventh grade I was sent East to be molded into the conventional form of a Hoosac boy.

Well, I didn't take kindly to molding. Our house was democratic in its set-up and, I suppose, progressive in its system of education. When guests were present, and I as a youngster wished to express an opinion, conversation was stopped until I had made my puerile speech. In our house the most valuable contribution to be made was the development of an idea. There was no seniority—we stood not upon the order of our speaking. Hoosac was the antithesis of this. It was dominated by a grand character, the Reverend Dudley Tibbets. He was a high Episcopalian and an ardent Anglophile. He and his brother owned a great estate with a stone house of the dignity of a castle. Le Grand Tibbets was, by every inch and by every action, lord of the manor. Dudley became the parish rector. Had there been a third son, he would have gone into the army. The school was modeled after the English system with six forms, arrogant proctors, and submergence of the little boys. We were taught Saxon history of England by the rector—nothing had happened since. We learned Latin and

Greek and declaimed in those languages. The young boys all wore Eton jackets. We took Sunday walks, played hare and hounds, did not associate with the peasantry. *Tom Brown's School Days*, *Good-bye Mr. Chips*, and all that. It was really ridiculous in this American scene. We were to be raised as "gentlemen." The school was founded on "code." We were to gain enough rules of life from the playgrounds of Hoosac to aid us to carry on—no matter what the emergency.

Needless to say I was a fish out of water. I always had had dirty hands. Now I had inspection before each meal. We were a one-bathroom family. Now I learned that a gentleman bathed every day, and a young gentleman spoke only when spoken to and then always said "Sir." Moreover, I had absolutely no intention of wearing Eton clothes. The school always had a financial problem. Now it had a Peattie problem. One overbearing proctor named Stanley I (Stanley II was a nice person) had to knock me down in order to maintain Hoosac standards.

For all that, I learned a great deal at Hoosac. It was a beautiful place. The rector had good taste. The services in the chapel were a high form of religious art. I became a sanctimonious youngster and helped found the Confraternity of the Good Shepherd. But still I was a poor student. Finally I did answer a question in Latin, and history was repeated when the teacher said, "Even Peattie knew that." At last the Latin teacher, a tiny man of the cloth named Holly, took me in hand and taught me to study. I went to him because I had received a penciled and irate note from Mother saying that I was mentally apathetic. My vocabulary was meager, and for "apathetic" I read "defective." I was greatly worried. Holly in turn was sympathetic. In spite of a bad start, by the end of the year I got Honorable Mention in the Lower School—all of which honor goes to Holly.

But Hoosac has my affection. It was situated in the Berkshires, beautiful at all seasons. I had numerous huts and tree houses. The deep winter snow delighted me. I took up skiing until once at the end of a long run I guided one ski to one side of an apple tree and the other ski to the other side. I stole out at night, via the fire escape, and had lonely, silent snowshoe trips along paths through the pines on Wilson Hill. One spring night, when all but neuters are restless, I bicycled to Hoosac Center. It was out of bounds, but I craved candy. Coming down the long hill into school I coasted with lights out. Sauntering up the hill was one of the younger masters with a girl I secretly loved. The bicycle struck him squarely, carrying him down the hill on the handle bars to a conclusion that only he and I know about. And the girl, but a moment before gallantly escorted, found herself mysteriously walking the road of life alone.

To do justice to the playgrounds of Hoosac, a great deal of good sportsmanship was there learned. At twelve I was a long-legged football hero—or thought I was. Once while lying back as defense on the football field I saw a strange apparition bearing down on me. An educator, who was an Episcopal monk and then hardly graduated from his athletic college experience, was visiting the school. He had tucked his robes into his trousers, been given the ball and was coming at me, his robes flying like sails. I was learning code. I would as willingly have tackled a monk as a nun. I made a half-hearted try, and the good father made a touch-down.

There were two years at Hoosac. I was content because I did not realize that I was a problem. After the second year I did not return. Things at home were not flowing smoothly. Father was delicate, sick, overworked and subject to fits of melancholy. Mother was demonstrative and overly sentimental. I was kept at home for the unconscious

happiness that unthinking youths can contribute. But I realized in part my role. It made life for me very dramatic and perhaps melodramatic. I did my best, but sometimes with a heavy heart—I was only thirteen. Like so many middle-aged problems of marriage, it worked itself out and was more completely forgotten by my parents than by me.

Hoosac had taught me to study, and so I easily took honors at the Harvard School in Chicago. But I was still in short pants. I belonged to a neighborhood literary club—all girls but myself. I had outgrown my stockings and my pants. Whenever I sat down among these girls there was a hiatus between my stockings and my pants. How I suffered! Then we boys formed a club—all young men. We would gather about our own fire, no other lights, to hear records on the new super-Victrola. I think we smoked. Then lights on, and one of the young aspirants read a literary composition. We were not without a sense of humor, however. When one overserious youth rolled out the opening, "The almost savage grandeur of the northern coast of Ireland . . ." we burst out in guffaws. He never finished. We ruined his literary career, and he became a salesman for rubber heels.

Just as the relationship between my short pants and my long stockings was becoming predominant in my life, I graduated into long trousers. There was a formal dance at the Kenwood Institute for Girls. My brother's Tuxedo was revamped for me. With hands trembling in excitement Father helped me dress. Suddenly he went white. The trousers were so long that when pulled up tight in the crotch they showed above the opening in the vest. Mother arrived with safety pins. I was saved. As I began life with safety pins about my loins, so I entered manhood.



## V

### ROMANTICISM BEGINS AT SEVENTEEN

I CAN hardly remember the time when I was not in love. I began first grade one September in a white, one-room schoolhouse that stood on a sand dune in western Michigan near Wildwood. It was dubbed Rod College by my family. Every day I went a mile to school through the peach orchards, hand in hand with a bucolic lassie named Lulu Licenring. But I was discriminating—not every ankle attracted me. When they placed against my John Alden an unattractive Priscilla, in fifth grade in Chicago, I announced my disgust. The rather heavy lady was to faint into my arms as Miles Standish returned. With definite purpose I failed to catch her unsylphlike form and let her slip unheeded to the floor. But at seventeen, though I owned a Tuxedo, women were submerged by a flood of other romantic philosophies. For a time, women were out. My emotional life was satisfied by new discoveries. Man could not live by bread and love alone: there must be some deeper satisfaction, some ordering to this sorry scheme of things. Omar Khayyam and Buddha and people like that had the answer.

It all started with Richard Hovey and Bliss Carman's *Songs of Vagabondia*. It was intensified by *More Songs of Vagabondia*. Life almost reached bursting point with the third volume, *Still More Songs of Vagabondia*—

There's a schooner in the offing,  
With her topsails shot with fire,  
And my heart has gone aboard her  
For the Islands of Desire . . .

or—

When the wind comes up from Cuba,  
And the birds are on the wing.

These poems did something to you, brought you to a point that love could never achieve. I owned a copy of *The Open Road*, in which there was a poem by Gerald Gould. It was called "Wanderlust":

I know not where the white road runs, nor what the blue  
hills are;  
But man can have the sun for friend, and for his guide a star;  
And there's no end of voyaging when once the voice is heard,  
For the river calls and the road calls, and, oh, the call of the  
bird!

It seemed as if my heart would break at the poignancy of this last line. You yourself may not understand how throbbing with life and lust (that is, wanderlust, not love) this last line was. It is a bit hard for me to comprehend how it forced me from my comfortable home to tramp furiously over lonely and desolate moors.

We were short on moorland in Windsor Park. There was a mile stretch of prairie known as Bushnell's Field, but a couple of baseball games were usually going on there. The lake shore was better. Wind-swept and lonely at nine o'clock at night was this shore, and a meditative figure could be discovered there immersed in bitter thoughts—and smoking a forbidden cigarette. I remember a phrase I had read about a man on a boat who had gone on deck

for a half-hour of cigarettes before going to bed. This was my ambition. What masculinity! There was a region near Chicago known as Little Holland wherein lived a colony of Dutch vegetable farmers. Through their placid fields I walked, thinking thoughts which the dullards in their cabbage patches could never comprehend.

I had by this time passed the destructive age when I led a thousand horsemen over Strawberry Hill at Wildwood and cut a swath through enemy ranks with a Lombardy poplar switch. I was now at a more mature stage, a philosophical and humanitarian stage, when I sought an answer to human frailty and the manner in which to achieve happiness. Of course I had read David Grayson's *Adventures in Contentment* and a lot of Walter Prichard Eaton. Perhaps you have guessed that already.

One had only to indicate the slightest curiosity in a subject for Father to bring home a small library. One birthday I received a complete set of John Burroughs. I had the works of Richard Jefferies and John Muir. I read *The Compleat Angler*, *Walden* and *The Natural History and Antiques of Selborne*. I had the essays of Emerson. I pondered on what would be the end of things, or what would persist when "Sultan after Sultan . . . went his way." The rear of the house roof was flat, and there I would lie at night, a part of the immensity of things. And I was lonely—there were no kindred souls to understand me.

In fact when we went to the country, Mother, wishing quiet for her writing, did choose places not too densely inhabited. I spent a winter at Tryon, North Carolina, by the waters of the swift Pacolet. I had a youthful winter along the romantic Bayou Barataria which flowed through moss-draped cypress swamps. I played idly by unnamed

brooks in New England. Lacking human companionship, I had water for a playmate. I was happier without conflict from other minds. At this point I might mention having discovered Henry van Dyke's *Little Rivers*.

Tryon is beautiful for many reasons, not the least of which is its waterfalls. Over black rocks the waters glide to dark pools scores of feet below. The cataracts are on lonely mountainsides. So I climbed these perilous cascades and lay panting upon the very crest. I had banged my knee in the climb. This, of course, was the *Lorna Doone* influence.

At this point I could quote by heart from W. B. Yeats:

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:  
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

Mother and I and a mountain driver had left the carriage to inspect old man Tiger's deserted and ruined cabin on Tryon Mountain. The cabin lay in a glade, there was a bee about, and the chimney was made of clay and wattles. So, with deep feeling and in a voice that I am sure would have pleased the author, I up and said my piece. The mountain man listened and then pointed to some garden rows and said: "Them ain't beans. Them's cotton." The world was hard on the young romantic.

Two summers of this joyous yet bitter stage of life were spent at Eagle's Nest Camp near Oregon, Illinois. This was a camp of cottages and studios on the summer estate of Wallace Heckman, business manager of the University of Chicago. The camp was occupied by practically the complete staff of the Art Institute of Chicago and certain gifted pupils. The life satisfied and enlarged my Bohemian tendencies. Until four in the afternoon all the adults

worked. Then studios were thrown open and the place became delightfully social. Weekly there was hilarious fun.

It was an annual event for Heckman to ride over on a fine horse and demand the dollar which represented the rent. On their knees the *rentiers* begged for reduction of fee. The simple peasantry so pleading bore such names as Lorado Taft, Charles Francis Browne, Oliver Dennett Grover, and Ralph Clarkson.

Saturday night brought visitors from Chicago. This was an occasion for costumes and comic opera. Without hope of faithfully carrying a single air, I was, nevertheless, Nanky Poo in the *Mikado*. I used to play at being orchestra maestro. With a dozen people playing upon combs, ten-cent flutes, kitchen cymbals, and a violin or two, I evoked some ridiculous symphonies. One time, as the caravan of arriving visitors at night passed the quarry they were stopped by gypsies. They were held for ransom, bound with ropes, while young and old danced madly about the artificially red campfire. There were two runaways that night as the horses of peaceful farmers were startled on their way to town. When Breasted, the Egyptologist, came the woods alley was lined with white sepulchral statues which, after being inspected, joined the procession.

It is at Eagle's Nest Camp that the fifty-foot statue of Black Hawk stands on the brink of a two-hundred-foot cliff overlooking the Rock River Valley. It is remarkable construction, a great monolith of cement. A plaster cast (such as sculptors make), greatly re-enforced, was constructed, and the cement poured in. As a modest laborer I worked on this strange piece of engineering.

Eagle's Nest Camp restored the idea of companionship to my philosophy of life. I discovered there was more fun in congenial company than in solitary meditation. Also I

figured out that no one man could have built the Black Hawk statue. Very simple lessons—progressive education—but I worked them out myself. And social life involved both sexes. There was a girl named Emma. Emma loved to giggle but had her serious moments. We canoed at night on the mysterious waters of the Sinnissippi (Rock River, to you), and I let her in on a few of my revealing philosophies. I hope that she enjoyed them as much as I enjoyed giving them.

When in Chicago my thoughts were more exactly directed by my environment. I believe that I knew every picture in the permanent exhibits of the Art Institute. With Mother I used to visit the studios of the Fine Arts buildings. I heard opera and, of course, there was the Thomas Orchestra. It played in the old Auditorium. Thomas for years dreamed of an Orchestra Hall of his own. He achieved the hall but held rehearsal in the building before the plaster was dry. He died from pneumonia taken from the dampness. I never liked Frederick Stock as an orchestra leader as much as I did Theodore Thomas, but Stock never knew that.

Newspaper connections gave me entrée to the theaters. I saw Irving, Mansfield, Sothorn, Marlowe, Bernhardt, Maude Adams and Otis Skinner. I had a rather good training in Shakespeare. For days after seeing a production I would go about declaiming some dramatic passage to myself. Ideas were coming thick and fast to me in those days. Don't think that I was a too-serious youth. I went to the rankest and most vacuous of musical comedies in town and took in some odd burlesque. I went to see the inane *Prince of Tonight* three times and developed a winking acquaintance with the black-haired chorus girl second from the right. I went to some cheap parties and worried my mother a lot. Some of these were in that uninteresting,

uninspired part of Chicago described in *Studs Lonigan*, though Studs saw a great deal of life of which I was scarcely conscious.

Manhood, however, was coming upon me, psychologically and biologically. I began to cast about for a life purpose. My father had once had tuberculosis, and so it was thought best that I pursue an out-of-door profession. I decided on forestry and assiduously read books in that new field. What a happy circumstance, for now I could combine bread-winning and romance! With stern face and natty uniform I would stand by my horse's head on some lonely eminence, watching with eagle eye for a wisp of smoke, some danger to the vast world of pointed firs in which I lived. The lonely campfire at night would suit my essentially unsocial character.

I got a summer job in the tree department in Jackson Park. I will confess now that, though I hoped in the future to be armed with a thirty-thirty rifle against the giant grizzly, in Jackson Park I was mostly engaged in hunting down caterpillars. For this I received a dollar a day flat rather than a bounty on each worm. Then I came in contact with an engineer who knew forestry. He explained that there was a great future for the American forest but somewhat less of a future for the men who guarded the forests. I, therefore, canceled my application to the School of Forestry at the University of Minnesota and, taking the line of least resistance, entered the University of Chicago.

On my first day in class—the subject was French—I sat behind a small, delicate creature named Margaret Rhodes. She had just returned from Paris and was *bien soignée*. The second day I spoke to her. She thought I was fresh. I was, but I knew what I was doing. With such impudence I discovered the romantic goal I had sought along the white roads and at the crests of waterfalls. Humanity in

general was no longer my problem but humanity in particular. I was no longer off women. In the opposite sex there seemed to be the possibility of an answer to all my questions. Omar Khayyam was somewhat nearer the truth than Buddha. In almost a moment I changed from a mystic to a realist. I went home that night and wrote a poem to a princess on a glass mountain. It was then nine o'clock. I dated the poem "Midnight" and went to bed.



## VI

### I BECOME A RATIONALIST AND DISCOVER GOD IN A LABORATORY

THIS callow youth that was entering the university in the fall of 1910 was not an average freshman. Nor was he abnormal, nor subnormal. In the first place, partly through his ignorance of college life, he was somehow aloof from the collegiate scheme of things. Also he did not represent a true mean because he knew so little of conventions. He was tall and thin, he had a shock of uncontrollable black hair, a prominent nose, and his arms were too long for his sleeves. He wore odd hats and affected an overcoat that was half cape. Sometimes he wore a stock about his neck as if he were about to go fox-hunting. His clothes, like his social practices, were a bit off color—if not blatant. Margaret Rhodes thought exactly this, and yet it was this very quality that kept him in her consciousness.

Recently a classmate of those days, one Burton Rascoe, has made report upon me, in his memoirs entitled *It Will Soon Be Later Than It Is Now*, or something like that. He makes me the height of campus fashion, dashing and spend-thrift, and suggests that I went through the family fortune, so that my brother Donald, following me, had mere crumbs of financial support. After college, according to Rascoe, I went East to write plays and apparently was sunk with-

out trace. The implication, which howls for attention, is that Donald won renown in spite, or because, of these handicaps, whereas I am probably limping along Broadway gutters, hoping for a handout. Well, I was not well dressed, but oddly dressed. I was always poor and earned part of my way by this task or that. I did not go to New York, certainly not to write plays. Now I love Donald dearly, but it must be confessed that Donald's education did not suffer for lack of money. He left Chicago because the young instructors under whom he was placed knew so little.

One of the many things I did not understand about college was the fraternity question. Yet through the efforts of friends I found myself a member of one of the most haughty-taughty of fraternities. We were quite sure that we were the best fraternity on the campus. Of course, a man is not worth his salt unless he feels his group of friends is best. At Amherst there are twelve fraternities, and each, by some strange mathematical formula, belongs to the big four. I will say that probably no group was more conscious of the necessity of proper social usage than ours. In our own eyes it elevated us to a position of almost unbelievable dignity. This attitude had a distinct civilizing influence on the young barbarians that each year were inducted. And today the Chicago Chapter of Alpha Delta Phi has the most constructive program of any chapter of any fraternity I know.

The seriousness with which fraternity men take themselves reminds me of the time when our family was being investigated by the Michigan Chapter of Psi Upsilon in my older brother's interest. Not being sure of Edward's family background, they had one of their seniors call on us. Father and Mother were tremendously amused as this youth with no hair on his lip solemnly looked us over. The

whole family read Emily Post in order to be on their good behavior.

The youth came for Sunday-night tea. A veritable banquet was prepared for him. As it was the maid's night out my still-young aunts served the table. Bertha came in with a roast surrounded by delicious gravy. She slipped and the roast fell to the floor, careening in its gravy. The family, already suppressing giggles with difficulty, broke into shouts of laughter. The young man looked at us with hurt dignity which in no way slowed down the hilarity. Bertha washed the roast and appeared in a fresh dress but was useless for serving the rest of the evening. Hazel, a blooming sort of person, holding in her giggles with difficulty, brought in the dessert. She stepped in the gravy and made a perfect back somersault. Even then the dignity of Psi Upsilon remained undisturbed. By the grace of God, Edward made the fraternity.

I was a fish out of water in fraternity life and was always self-conscious among the brothers. I never learned to be hail-fellow-well-met, as I desired to be, and I am afraid that I served the house but little. It was a fact that the group did have good social standing—which aided me greatly. However, I did not live in the house but commuted daily to Windsor Park. For the first two years I knew little about college life but was absorbed by my classes.

Up to this point, one would have little basis for guessing the direction of my intellectual interests. It was an exact science, geology. This came about largely through the personality of a teacher under whom I enlisted in the opening term. The manner in which this professor approached learning so impressed me that he is the only teacher whose classroom manner I consciously imitate. He was at once an exact scientist and a romantic. He encouraged one to learning, he made learning dramatic, and he accomplished

the mental discipline of his students while he smiled. He was past master at three-dimensional chalk drawing. He would enter the classroom, pleasantly look us over, and then without a word turn to the board and make geologic processes live for us. I did not, as students say, "crack a book," but I was given an A in the course. In my graduate days I followed him to Harvard and took my doctor's degree under him. He is now President Wallace W. Atwood of Clark University.

Yet there is no substitute for work. If my geology had been solely under such an "easy" professor I should have missed much of the virtue of exact science. The discipline of fact was supplied me by another, the dominating Rollin D. Salisbury. Salisbury was tall, a quick-moving man with a Vandyke beard. Though he could be most affable he was a slave driver. He demanded quickness of reply that was terrifying, and he literally harassed students at their work. If an answer in class was the least bit vague he would snap out, "Perfectly true, perfectly general, perfectly meaningless." He did not like to have women in his class and would flay them, intellectually speaking, until I have seen them cry. We called him "Old Sol" to his back, and one day a woman in class said to him through her tears, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" She won him over completely. In reality, his harsh mannerisms were affected for the good of the student. Unobtrusively he aided his charges in every way possible. He disciplined and encouraged me alternately. Though at the end of my freshman year I received a letter from him praising my work, once he had me in class he was merciless. As he walked into the room he would start, "Mr. Mr. Mr. Peattie," and then, having frightened me, would shoot a question at me.

I worked under one other professor renowned for his caustic teaching. Sarcasm with him was not an affectation

but a quality of character. This was Robert Herrick, teacher of English and novelist of note. Herrick was impatient with all efforts but his own. He made claim that he had discouraged more writers than any living man—a curious boast for a teacher. He was the world's best snubber and alienated his friends by describing them intimately in his books. It is said that *The Master of the Inn* was a betrayal of confidence. He broke off friendship with Mother because he said she had reviewed him too intimately—the shoe on the other foot. I therefore put my head into the literary lion's mouth in taking a course with him. I once approached him and said, "Mr. Herrick, may I speak to you?"

He looked me over for a minute as if in astonishment and replied, "Why, no!"

He told me that my vocabulary was meager but adequate to express my thoughts. His last remark to me was, "Mr. Peattie, you will not find it necessary to take any more English." Herrick was, however, so brilliant that one could disregard his insulting manner. I admired his writings greatly.

A third element in my scientific education was supplied by Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin. He was the most important philosopher in geology in his day. With Moulton, the mathematician, he evolved the planetesimal hypothesis for the origin of the earth. He was a kindly old man with twinkling eyes and a most venerable white beard. His face had something quite spiritual about it. He had hurt his knee and drove up daily in a hack. Once in his office he would pore over articles with the aid of a large reading glass. A student coming from a conference with Chamberlin felt that he had received a lesson in courtesy. I had a seminar course under him, for I had specialized in geology and was permitted in graduate courses. Indeed, I was a

teaching assistant in the department in my junior year. In this seminar each student submitted twenty questions on as many sheets of paper. These were arranged according to geologic chronology. The fine old philosopher would answer the questions in turn—in a manner which somehow gave the impression of humbleness in the face of great truths.

Only once did science courses fall short of what could be desired. The chemistry department was an impersonal factorylike division with too many students. The department seemed to have the attitude that here were facts—take them or leave them. I received from it no personal help in my laboratory problems, merely impersonal grading. So demanding was the department—and unjustly—that when we students, serving on a commission that put in the honor system, discovered more cheating in chemistry than in any other department we did not blame the students but condemned the department. I started chemistry under a Scotchman who had just given up his kilts. I could not understand his brogue, and therefore never properly understood the science. It was an educational crime to expect a large auditorium of youngsters to base their science upon his teachings. I disliked him thoroughly, and I hope that he went back to live by some dank tarn in a lonely glen.

I had had, then, three inspiring teachers in geology. One dramatized science for me, a second forced me to factual thoroughness, and a third gave me a broad philosophical outlook. I determined that geology should be my career. Science became my delight because, I suspect, it opened for me new channels of thought. Too often students in college choose to develop merely their propensities and so miss opportunities to open new rooms in the brain. My new enthusiasms led me to crystallography (the most exact science in the world), mineralogy, microscopic petrology

and paleontology. The young romanticist was fast becoming a rationalist. I even investigated such subjects as spectroscopy and astrophysics. Encouraged by Atwood at the end of my sophomore year, I determined to become a college professor. So unexpected was my choice of career that its announcement sent my mother off into gales of laughter.

Geologists are little trained without field experience. As a freshman I pursued a field course about Chicago. That summer I went with a class for a month to Baraboo, Wisconsin, in a region that is remarkable for its geologic interest. It overlaps both the glaciated and the nonglaciated hill country. It is marked by some high and very ancient quartzite hills, flanked by later sedimentary rocks of considerable variety. The tops of the ridges represent an old river erosion level. Such we call a dissected peneplain. As the ridges slowly elevated with continental changes of level the precursor of the Wisconsin River cut a gorge through the quartzite. Then the glacier dislodged the river and dammed each end of the gorge so as to form the now much visited Devil's Lake. The unraveling of these problems absorbed me. Moreover, there was just enough swagger to camp life—the high boots, the instruments of precision and what have you—to remind me of the forestry profession of which I had once dreamed.

Later in the summer I made an expedition with a class for a month in and about Ouray, Colorado. I partly paid for the trip (Rascoe take notice!) by making a collection of rocks for the Chicago Academy of Sciences. Ouray lay at the end of a canyon, and there one always heard the splashing of cascades down canyon walls. The settlement was a rather rough mining center with much picturesqueness, cowboys, miners, pack trains and the like. And geology in the clear atmosphere of the West and in the

deep canyon gashes in the earth has great definitude. Nature there lays bare her secrets. We worked in mountains and on desert plain. It was my first experience with the real West. Father had been to Ouray in its earliest days and Mother had written her Western novel *The Edge of Things*. I was brought up on descriptions of the desert, the purple mountain shadows and the freshness of enclosed canyons. We camped in groves of aspens, we rode horses, we carried unneeded revolvers and we wore, when being photographed, useless chaps. We followed dizzy trails to isolated mining camps. We crossed passes where we had to drag our horses down snow fields. And, at last, I stood beside my horse's head "looking with eagle eye over the vast expanse of plains below."

Back at the university I took up the musty study of paleontology. One summer was spent in the Ozarks, collecting fossils. I worked hard. In my elementary education, though I sat hours at my school desk, I was in spirit frequently far away in green fields beside running brooks. Now I needed no spur to concentration. There was high interest in making definite conclusions based upon accumulated facts. Reasoning was exciting, but habits and mental attitudes can never be entirely set aside. I was still something of the mystic—I still am. At Hoosac School I had been as deeply religious as a healthy, active boy of twelve could be. I carried this emotionalism with me so that in Chicago I served regularly as an altar boy at early mass in our local Episcopal chapel. But the ritual and pomp which had marked the services at Hoosac were lacking in Windsor Park. In fact, the services were pretty barren of beauty. I remember one Easter Sunday, after the choir had "murdered" a great choral, our little minister—we called him the Pastorette—rocked back and forth on his heels and announced through his beaver teeth, "Tonight



the choir will give us *The Crucifixion*." It was too much for the dignity of the congregation. Men left the service to break into laughter in the vestibule.

But now, having discovered science, I lived in a mechanistic world. I had no need for so personal a God. A man does not have deep personal convictions until he has doubted. I was going through my period of doubt—I was preparing myself for more personal conviction. But my early religious experiences were of some avail, for they gave me a foundation of mysticism which was now to serve me. Then I discovered God in a paleontological laboratory.

I had been working upon the phylogeny of the common river clam. If you will examine less and less matured clam shells, perhaps microscopically, you will discover primitive stages of development which in each case are similar to some of the early geologic ancestors of your mollusk. This is the great story of the recapitulation of the race, the theory which claims that every step in the evolution of an organic form may be discovered telescoped into the early life of the individual you are considering. It explains why the zinnia seedling looks so unlike the matured plant, why the salmon goes to fresh water to spawn, why the frog begins its early life as a polliwog, and why eons of time are represented in the stages of the human embryo.

Of course, these marvels of evolutionary recapitulation and the progress of life had long been known; but to me they were a personal discovery of great importance. I leaned back from the dusty laboratory table, swept aside as it were the details that were there represented by the fossils, and saw a vision which was the great story of ceaseless and, I liked to think, progressive change. I had now before me not merely the story of the rise from protoplasm to man, but the motivating theme of the story. Here were values of which my professors, Williston and Weller, said

nothing. So wonderful to me was the revelation that I felt no need to look further for evidence of Godhead. Here at last was something true and yet inexplicable which I might worship. I then wrote my first article. I had no trouble in having it accepted by the *Chicago Literary Monthly* because, by happy chance, I was editor. The article was entitled *The Religion of a Geologist*. I documented my ideas with quotations from Goethe, Tennyson, Ranke, and Herbert Spencer. I wrote with the high literary mannerisms of twenty years of age:

"Then, slowly and kindly, it dawned upon me that after all, back of each phenomenon was something in evolution yet unanalyzed, an inspiration, a spirit we could never compress within a test tube nor lay beneath a microscope. It furnished the spark, it permeated the world, it was the cause of the remotest star, of the blade of grass at my feet. It was unnamed, unmeasured, and always would be. With greater reverence than my boyhood knew, I was again brought to my knees in worship of the Eternal."

The writing of the article made me happy because it reconciled my imaginative and rationalistic experiences. Also it attracted some adult friends. Several professors wrote me kindly notes. Atwood said, "Rod, you are not yet a geologist, and I doubt if you know what God is; but I like the article." Salisbury made no comment; perhaps he feared mysticism in a student of his exact teachings.

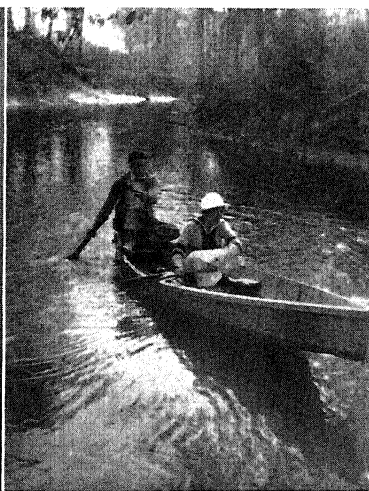
I was by no means always faithful to my studies. Though serving the inner workings of my fraternity but slightly, I represented the group in many campus organizations. I was property man and then stage manager for the rather elaborate productions of the Dramatic Club, and even wrote a play for it. I was a poor actor. I was unwise enough to spend time writing, in collaboration with Donald Breed, an extravaganza called *Pranks of Paprika*. The text



There came a day when I did ride my horse over western mountain ranges.



At the University of Chicago I became absorbed in Science.



Wooing in 1914 was not done in a jallopy.



was utter foolishness, but the lyrics had sufficient virtue to inspire our collegiate musicians to excellent melodies. The most sophisticated of the musical compositions was by Margaret's brother. I was kept busy accepting my own contributions for the "*Lit.*" I became a member of the Student Senate and found it a worth-while experience. In our local fashion, I was "tapped" for the senior honor society. This was an organization of great self-importance and was a bit stuffy: after a year of pontifical deliberation we approved the installation on the gymnasium of a fire escape that was about to go up anyway. I was chosen one of the twelve university marshals, a distinct honor. Margaret Rhodes was an aide, the female of the species. We wore maroon tassels on our mortarboards and performed at university functions.

At the end of my junior year Salisbury called me in and said: "I have here a complete list of your outside activities. If you wish to continue your work in geology you will cut them in half."

I said: "Yes, sir. May I see the list?" I was amazed at the number of memberships and committees listed. I studied them carefully, returned the paper, and continued: "Yes, sir. You have everything there but a drinking club."

## VII

### PLEASANT IS THE DAY

THE aforesaid Margaret Rhodes was daily becoming more important and yet more difficult. In the first place she was about the size of a tennis racket, and as such was elusive. Also she had not matured to such a point as to be concerned with so serious a thing as love, much less marriage. And, indeed, why should she worry? Was not the world her oyster? Studies came easily to her, so did friends. She was, as far as I was concerned, altogether too popular; the Phi Gams, who gave much more original and hilarious parties than the Alpha Delts, wooed her collectively.

I seemed unable to distinguish myself from the background of friends who sang chorus to her lead. Also, my method of attack was not the best. I was a ride-out-of-the-west-and-throw-her-across-your-saddle type. Margaret preferred to ride her own horse. I would try the once-aboard-the-lugger gag only to find that Margaret enjoyed navigation and would take charge of the tiller. Quite sincerely she pulled this let's-be-good-friends stuff and had little idea that since the first day we met I had had black designs against her. The first intimation that I was serious—more serious than my financial position justified—came when I met her parents.

Dr. and Mrs. Rhodes were chaperons at one of those

free-for-all benefit dances which occur on any campus. They came back inquiring of Margaret about an ungainly young man with a strange name who had pointedly interviewed them. He appraised their intellectual interests in a searching fashion. At least that is their story. It seems out of character for me — I was probably merely attempting to find some flaw in Margaret and her background so that I could classify her in that earthly grouping we know as human beings. Anyway, we four had good laughs over it in years to come.

John Edwin Rhodes was a distinguished surgeon. His kindly face, the twinkle in his eye and his well-kept, square beard permitted any one who looked to read his character and to like it. He was the most moral man I ever knew, though twice under provocation, it is true, I heard him take the oath of "Pshaw." His venerable appearance as he ushered at the Hyde Park Baptist Church fixed on him the title of Archdeacon. He had given up banking at thirty-five years of age to go into medicine as a nose-and-throat specialist. His profession was really a calling—he wanted to help humanity. Therefore, though he had a various practice and a fashionable one, which included always the staff of the opera company, he gave half his time to charity, by principle. He was the physician and surgeon for two children's hospitals. One was a Catholic institution, and he was beloved of the sisters. Each Christmas they gave him gifts. One time it was a shovel, all gilded and with a scene painted on it. But for some reason they used to give him lace nightgowns and boudoir caps. After he had treated a poor Italian free for years, the man walked in one day and laid one hundred dollars on the desk: he would pay his own way now, bootlegging had brought him prosperity.

Louise White Rhodes, the very girl that had looked upon

the dead face of Lincoln, was a vivacious person. She was quick of motion and quicker of wit. The doctor's line was medicine and humanity. Mother Rhodes lived to be a connoisseur in matters cultural. For years she had the same seat at the Thomas orchestra and seldom missed a performance. Her library was of the best; and what she liked, she liked avidly. Her chief literary interest lay in poetry and in the English and Russian novels. We have many of her volumes, carefully marked and annotated in a fine hand, especially in those sections that pertain to the philosophy of life. She loved the theater but was critical. She would see a play, and then perhaps come home to write it to her own taste. She was overly shy, and she was modest. She destroyed her writings as soon as completed. She and my sister Barbara came to have much in common.

Not that it really mattered to me, but I must have approved the inheritance of my chosen, for from henceforth I brought my suit obtrusively into the open. Of course, we were young and I was penniless. Also Margaret Rhodes was having too good a time in general to wish to particularize by becoming Peggy Peattie or even to be claimed by the awkward youth. This she quite definitely explained to me as we both leaned on a newel post outside her apartment door, a newel post which marked the end of an evening. I was a gentleman even in defeat. I would die as I lived, gallantly. No one should see me wince. To demonstrate this I leaned to kiss her lily-white hand only to find that I had placed my passionate lips to the newel post. To this day I do not know whether this was an accident due to my impetuosity or a design for a defense mechanism by the elf to whom I was making my farewell.

It was in May of my junior year. Now I found myself looking upon the annual budding and blossoming season, the period when lambs gambol on the green, looking upon



soft spring with lackluster eyes. Thwarted love has always affected not my heart but my stomach. That organ now seemed to have no bottom. How could the birds sing so inanely? How could people so foolishly make merry? I would go away and forget. And now comes the surprise. I did. I went to Europe. With my brother Donald, then of high-school age, and three college mates, I packed knapsack and sailed from Boston for Liverpool. I was glad. I would return a new and refreshed personality. Perhaps I would even grow a mustache. I would cast aside my former life and forget. I did forget. My poems no longer began:

Last night I spent a moonlit hour  
In Paradise with you  
And yet I did not touch the flower  
That there in sweetness grew.

Now I wrote about sunset on the coast of Ireland. We passed the Old Head of Kinsale as the still waters were golden. All about were little fishing boats becalmed by evening. I committed to paper a particularly bad effusion while sitting alone on the Cotswold Hills—something about Chipping Campden, I believe. Also my comrades were gay.

It was the first time that my brother Donald and I became really conscious of each other. He was a rare youth with a deep feeling for beauty. Another comrade was Donald Breed, with whom I wrote *Pranks of Paprika*. He had a fine sense of humor, loved humanity, and had learned the timetables of Europe by heart. Paul Lowery was a veteran of many tramping trips with me, and we had shared much geological field work. And there was no one more delightful than Frank Murphy, a talented Irish American, the best in the world. All three were members

of our innocent drinking club of which Salisbury was ignorant. Our buoyancy was proof against the boat sinking. But our hilarity reached its height when we landed at Liverpool, for as the boat swung around to the dock we were brought face to face with a huge sign which read CHEW B.V.D.

Going to Europe in those days was an experience which in these war-torn times can never be repeated. It was then a sentimental voyage. We did not dash from capital to capital, attempting to understand English attitudes towards the latest Rumanian cabinet or to estimate the purpose of the Italian press. No one felt hurt at not being asked to tea on the terrace of the Houses of Parliament. Youngsters like ourselves were not concerned with war or peace or politics: we took things for granted.

A young girl, in 1940, said to me during a musicale at our house, "You know, the only things I am really interested in are labor, international politics, and God."

"Baby," I said to her, "in my day we had absolutely no idea what the workman's dollar was worth; and we didn't care."

As I write, my son aged twenty-one has just returned from a bicycling trip abroad. He studied youth movements, Nazi economics, got into the Reichsbank library and discovered a secreted volume of *Das Kapital*, and became interested in the psychological response to black-outs in Paris. To do him justice as a son of mine, word of the war did literally discover him dancing Strauss waltzes in Grinzing, outside Vienna. He brought back a picture of Vienna Woods, with a charming creature of the opposite sex in the foreground. I asked him who she was. He said that she was a hostel mother. I should like to know which hostel.

But *we* did not study in our *Wanderjahr*. We visited

galleries and cathedrals, we wandered plan-free, tossing our hats at the crossroads to determine our direction. Disaster was like distant and unheeded thunder. We had heard of compulsory military service and armaments. Theodore Roosevelt had visited the Kaiser and come back with glowing reports of the German military machine. There was in existence a Carnegie Peace Foundation. If Carnegie wanted to give away his money, that was his business. I had memorized from Robert Louis Stevenson:

Give to me the life I love,  
Let the lave go by me,  
Give the jolly heaven above  
And the byway nigh me.  
Bed in the bush with stars to see,  
Bread I dip in the river—  
There's the life for a man like me,  
There's the life forever.

Our first thrill, à la Clara Laughlin, was Conway Castle, grey-green towers in a green Welsh valley. I manned the turret to watch for the line of enemy knights streaming down the valley. At first we did a good many conventional things: saw Chester, the Lake Country, took the usual Trossachs trip by boat and coach; but I was lifted out of myself for the first time by my great Gothic experiences. York Minster definitely did something to me. I fixed the details of the "Five Sisters" window in my mind so that I retain them still.

Then my brother and I alone began to tramp, aimlessly and happily. We once lunched at a country inn Ye Green Lamb, or something. The worthy yeomanry were crowded in the taproom having their pints of ale. So I went among them and consumed one pint of warm ale. Shortly I was lying under a hedge row. I passed out for two hours while my brother sat beside me in the English meadow and no

doubt had thoughts of his own. We got to Ely in the evening. Exploring the town, we found the entire populace walking in one direction along the highway. We fell in with them. Soon we noticed that they carried square wicker hampers. Coming to a basket store, I bought one. Finally my curiosity overcame me and I asked a stranger striding along beside me, "Pardon me, but what does one put in these baskets?"

He looked at me with astonishment. "Blow me, don't you know? This is the day we all go to the marshes to catch eels."

Our company came together again, and we all went to France. We arrived at grey Dieppe at dawn. The first animation in the town was a gay group of young people skipping down the street, returning from a party. It was as the geography had said, "The French are fond of dancing and light wines." By train we got to Rouen in time for breakfast and went into a chocolate shop. Two exceedingly pretty French girls waited upon us. Paul was noted for his susceptibility, but his French fell short of his needs. He got out a phrase book, and by chance opened to the section for use when consulting with a doctor. "How is your stomach?" "Is your liver working better?" The girls went into giggles, and Madame shooed them to the rear and took charge of the situation.

An hilarious incident occurred in Paris. We went to the Folies-Bergères as boys will. Between acts we sauntered about and stepped into the restroom to see a couple of men about a couple of dogs. Frank felt no need to answer the call of nature but for company's sake went inside. As we came out an old woman was collecting a sou from all. Frank explained that he had had no especial design in entering—merely curiosity, as it were.

But no, he must pay his sou.

A crowd of both sexes gathered. Some claimed that Frank had made use of the facilities; some said, not necessarily so. The crowd grew in size and animation. The questions of liberty, fraternity and equality were all brought up. In any case, Frank must pay his sou. So Frank went inside, got his money's worth and paid his sou. The Third Republic was saved. Such action was not always so costly. I can remember asking a policeman for what was known at the Baptist Church in South Haven as the men's walk. He turned to me with surprise and said, "*Mais, monsieur, il y a toute la belle France.*"

Breed went off somewhere checking up on his memorized timetables. Paul and Frank were to sail from Havre. The four of us returned to Dieppe and began tramping the coast westward to meet the boat. Happy freedom of the road!

Life is very pleasant, brother,  
Pleasant is the day.  
Pleasant 'neath the jolly sky  
To tramp along the way.  
Sweeter though the nighttime  
The stars throughout the sky.  
Life is very pleasant, brother:  
Who would wish to die?

So we followed the white roads through the ripening wheat, besprinkled with poppies. There were shady villages like oases in the heat, straw-thatched villages; the white, chalk cliffs and the so-blue sea. It was really too much like a cover for the *Ladies' Home Journal*. As we went we memorized Kipling's *Song of the Banjo*. It was Frank's first romantic wandering. The Celt rose in him. He strode ahead, the wind in his black curls, his shirt open à la Byron, his extra clothes in a handkerchief tied to the stick over his shoulders. We were approaching Veules-

les-Roses, and up over the hill on a bicycle came as beautiful a girl as romantic twenty could dream of. Indeed, Frank himself was beautiful. Kismet! Predestination! The two were astonished that after years of searching for each other they had met.

The girl, driven by Destiny, rode directly at Frank. Frank, I think, did not want to get out of the way. Well, we separated them, picked them up, and the two continued in their opposite directions. Within a mile we were in the town that was known for its myriads of climbing roses. Frank seemed too tired to proceed though it was early afternoon, so we put up for the night. We didn't argue the point.

That night I remained for a time in the hotel writing letters. Later I walked down towards the *plage* and casino to look for the crowd. Passing a high garden wall, I heard familiar laughter on the other side. I went over the wall (I had done as much before), and there was Frank, the life of a family party—the family of the girl. She was, it proved, a young English actress. Frank is now grey-headed, as charming to ladies as ever, but the possession of none.

Don and I returned to England. We decided that we really did not understand continental backgrounds. England we understood. The rector's course at Hoosac had given me a particular love of Saxon England. Then came a succession of glorious impressions: Canterbury, Winchester (Arthur's Camelot), Salisbury, and Stonehenge. A sentimental pilgrimage to Devon and the Lorna Doone country. Do you remember how in the opening of the book John Ridd rides the Minehead coach as it pushes its way through the dark fog? Lost in the fog, we were startled by the Minehead coach and its six horses. At Lynmouth I hurt my leg, and the tramping for a time was over. We sat uncertain on the beach when some men came to launch

a dory. They were going to a steamer lying far out in the shallow bay. We went with them, boarded the steamer, and after the dory had pushed off announced ourselves to the captain and asked, respectfully, to what port he might be going. Our travel was as casual as that.

We landed at Bristol and went up the Vale of Evesham. In that vale is Broadway, one of the most beautiful villages in England. Far back from a green passage through the town stand Jacobean houses of sandstone.

In England, one vans. When you van you get a house-wagon and an old horse and go about as you please. In this country we go in trailers, but in England the distances are, of course, not great and there is no hurry. I had a letter to a girl who was vanning. I had an idea that she was in a certain walled enclosure at Stratford. I called at the enclosure. The wall was six feet high. I knocked at the great gate. A girl standing on a ladder inside put her head over the wall, waved a teapot at me, and said without further identifying me, "Won't you come in for tea?"

At Oxford we got in for a whole series of teas. We started to canoe down the Thames to Maidenhead. A friend telegraphed ahead to a friend who telegraphed ahead, so that every lunch, tea and dinner en route was served us by a lady in a Leghorn hat and in a punt bearing a hamper. The only blight on our pleasure was the damned swans. They would snatch perfectly delicious tea biscuits from our hands. I became exasperated and demanded of an Englishman, "Who do they belong to?"

He looked at me in astonishment, perhaps because I had not said "To whom," and replied, "Oh, the Queen, I suppose."

This voyage is worth recording in detail because it is history. Such a journey is impossible today. It is a different world, so full of social consciousness, racial hate,

and unrest. Moreover, we have a different psychology. Perhaps I was the last of the romantics. All this was in the summer of 1913. That some young men said that one day they would have to fight Germany did not register with me. I, and they, did not know that in a twelvemonth most of them would be marked for death. Only one premonition did I have of the future. Walking alone on a down above Winchester at night (for some esoteric British reason a down is always up), I heard a *scuff, scuff, scuff*. It was an entirely strange sound to me. Soon the militia passed, marching down the road in step.

I remembered this when not so many years afterwards I lay awake in a pup tent beside a road near Château-Thierry and heard the tired troops the whole night through *scuff, scuff* up to positions from which they were to turn the Germans back.

I returned from England with the beginnings of a fine case of typhoid fever, by the St. Lawrence route. It was late September and the Laurentides were brilliant with turned maples. I have always loved coasts of the sea, and the little, white villages of the littoral intrigued me. Within a few years I was to tramp these villages, living in the farmhouses.

After a bout with fever I was back at college. Margaret and I saw each other, served on the same committees, but maintained a forced impersonal relationship. I went with no other girls. Afterwards I found that she thought I was being faithful to her. Sorry—I was just off women—too busy about men's affairs. So we went through the year until the graduation reception. I don't know that you have noticed it, but there is something about these June receptions. At such times everything goes haywire and no values are normal. This reception was no exception—it was a gay out-of-doors affair in Mandel Court, lights everywhere,



people milling happily about, youth at its best, and the university band playing its worst.

By some set of now inexplicable circumstances Margaret and I found ourselves alone on a parapeted terrace of the bell tower, looking down on the crowds who seemed so unaware how fate might suddenly change lives. Margaret was about to go abroad as a graduation reward and to study in Paris. It occurred to me that just to end a friendship completely and finally, to close the last door, I might ask for a kiss. Well, the kiss prolonged itself into one of those clinches from which one never recovers. Thus our betrothal began. But it had hardly begun when the band below struck up with more than usual feeling the popular tune of the minute. It was *You Need Sympathy, Sympathy, Just Sympathy*.

As at the party when Father and Mother met and knew their fate, Margaret had come with someone else. After he had taken her home, I called. Wordsworth beat me to it with the proper lines:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very Heaven!

## VIII

### AN ARTHURIAN AT THE YANKEE COURT

AFTER graduation I set about to consolidate my sentimental gains. I did some serious wooing. In those days one did not jump into a jalopy and ride out to pitch jitters at some remote night club. We hired a buggy drawn by a safe and responsible horse and went into the country for a day's picnic. Once there we picked violets, spread our luncheon, perhaps boated a little, and in our gentle way came to understand the secrets of nature. Such a trip Margaret and I took out among the sand dunes of the Michigan shore. With intrigue worthy of a light opera we escaped the attention of a house party and ran away. Somewhat embarrassed, because our purpose was so obvious, we applied at a livery stable for a single-seater and an intelligent horse. We got an old white mare. To divert the liveryman's mind, I asked what the name of the old mare might be.

He straightened up from searching for the end of the belly cinch, looked us over, and said, kindly, "Her name is Romance."

Later in the summer I went to visit my lady in her summer home on isolated North Manitou Island in northern Lake Michigan. It was a fine wild land and the scene of many happy memories for both of us. I went by night

steamer. This was before the days of radio; the island had no telephone, and my boat arrived before the daily mail-cutter from the mainland. I brought with me a newspaper which had scare headlines saying that war had been declared in Europe. Those were the days when they declared war! It seems most strange to us now—how remote such news could be. There was nothing personal in it, except for me.

Margaret was still intending to go abroad for a year. I felt my hold on her too tenuous. I was delighted with the war, for now she would be kept at home; also I was happy because I carried with me a ring. It was a large, pink river pearl mounted in twisted gold. It came from the craftsman's shop of Madelene Yale Wynne, who was a friend of the family and had put some affection into its construction. Margaret as a little girl had always planned that she should receive a horse for an engagement present. Most people would have expected me to give a diamond. Neither of us was conventional.

Nor was the presentation conventional. Margaret on the island did not live in her parents' cottage. She lived in a large tree-house. So I climbed up, pulled up the ladder after me and thus, in every sense up in the air, made my presentation. I became engaged in a tower, presented the ring in a tree-house. I really wonder that our marriage was not performed in a Zeppelin. After we married and I went into the war the tree-house became too small for her needs. There was a blessed event. At first she used to climb up and then pull up the baby in a basket. But later a first floor was built between the tree level and the ground. How the old island carpenter grumbled! This was the first time that he had built a house from the top down.

There was a nice touch of patriotism attached to this

rebuilding. The lumber had to come by sailing schooner seventy miles from Traverse City. As it was being unloaded the skipper asked for whom it was ordered. The carpenter explained it was for "a little lady whose man was in France."

"She gets no bill from me," said the skipper, and sailed away—I regret, without leaving his name.

I had still to win over my contemplated parents-in-law. The doctor was easy. He was soft on his daughter and agreed to anything she said. After he had inquired into my medical history and that of my parents, listened to my chest as it were, he passed me. But Mrs. Rhodes was not sure that I culturally made the grade. True, I did not meet her standards; and yet I had some smatterings of knowledge. One of these served me well. I was walking with Margaret on one of those moonlight nights whose beauty fairly rends the heart. We passed her mother and a friend of equal literary knowledge as they sat on a bench. Mrs. Rhodes said to her friend, "'In such a night—' I wish I could remember that line and where it comes from."

I did not know a dozen lines of Shakespeare but I knew this one. I broke in, "'In such a night Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls.' That's from *The Merchant of Venice*." And I named the act and the scene. I was out of the red. I was a man of literary culture.

I spent a year in graduate work at the University of Chicago getting nowhere very fast. Salisbury still remembered my imposing list of extracurricular activities and refused to recognize my new seriousness. But more than that, rationalism was palling on me. As interesting as it was, I had gained from it what I needed; and I did not see geology as a lifework. It lacked human contacts. It was romantic only by stretching the definition of the word.

I was too interested in people—and quite naturally I turned to a kindred science, geography.

To make the proper break I decided to go to Harvard. But graduate work seemed something unnecessarily extra to my parents who had gone so far with so little schooling. They had learned about people from people themselves. Also they were stunned with the idea that they should have to support me further. Mother made this agreement:

She occasionally did twelve-installment serials for the *Youth's Companion* and for them received twelve hundred dollars. These were girls' stories. If I would outline in detail a plot of a girls' story and do all the needed copying Mother would do the writing and we would divide the returns.

That summer I did the task. It was eventually published in book form, but I have forgotten the title. So in the autumn of 1915, with six hundred dollars in my pocket, I ventured into the Yankee Court known as Harvard. I felt the significance of the moment. The weight of culture in that venerable center of learning awed me. Walking to my quarters that first afternoon, I seemed to feel the spirit of Longfellow and of Emerson, the refinements and gentle amenities of literary life, pervading the very street on which I walked. I was rudely awakened by the conversation of two men passing me. One said to the other, "He must be crazy. He takes his hat off to his sister."

However, I was once admitted to the inner of inner chambers. I was allowed to have communion with the spirit of all that is holiest in Harvard Yard and along that narrow but tremendously cultured Way of Light known as Brattle Street. I knew a young woman who was privileged to live in the Yellow House at the corner of the Yard. This house is so revered that not even the President of the University may enter without bowing three times as he

crosses the threshold. It was inhabited by Dr. Palmer—a scholar in his own right, but renowned also as the husband of Alice Freeman Palmer.

Would I come to Dr. Palmer's house to hear a Sunday evening of poetry?

Needless to say, I would be delighted. Indeed, I myself had read Emerson and Thoreau and Whitman and Longfellow. I knew one of Longfellow's poems completely by heart. It ran:

Joy and Temperance and Repose.  
Slam the door on the doctor's nose.

In fact we had had at the house on Bond Avenue an illustrated edition of Longfellow over which I used to pore. It was not *Hiawatha* that pleased me so much as an illustration of a Rossetti-like lady attended by a troubadour fellow. The picture had the caption, "There I wooed a blue-eyed maiden, yielding yet half afraid." All this was back in the short-pants period. More recently, I had visited Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, the House of the Seven Gables, and Walden Pond. I felt prepared for the visit, but I was in no way prepared for what I found.

I called at a darkened house. I was met at the door almost secretly and ushered on tiptoe past the study door to a second door that let into the rear of the same room. There I was given one of the folding chairs that undertakers have. In the gloom I could make out perhaps a dozen people sitting with me in rows, silent, cowed. At the far end of the room was a single desk lamp with a low, dark shade; and there were two easy-chairs. Then a sense of expectancy was felt through the silent gloom, and two men entered. They sat down in the easy-chairs without, apparently, being aware of our presence. One was a Palmer and the other was a Cabot. This combination was

overwhelming. Two gods in one night! For several hours they read poetry of the Concord School—read to each other, and quietly and learnedly discussed their readings. A tap on the shoulder told me and my mysterious comrades that we might leave now. The actors remained silent, without turning their heads, as we left.

Once out of the house I again breathed the good air that is found on those levels far beneath Parnassus. I remembered the evenings in our old house on Bond Street, their freedom and quick repartee. Once again I felt my own individualism. I returned to my quarters, called in the gang, found a bottle of wine, and began an evening of high ribaldry.

At Harvard I knew really only three buildings: my dormitory, the eating hall and the Agassiz Museum. I lived so isolated a life that I can scarcely be thought of as a Harvard man. I studied mainly under two men: my former mentor Dr. Atwood, and the brilliant climatologist and disciplinarian Robert De Courcy Ward. The two men were exact opposites. I felt most at home with Atwood, but I obtained most from Ward. Atwood was easy-going and believed in self-discipline by the student. I was to write my doctor's thesis under him. After several weeks I called his attention to the fact that I had not been assigned a thesis subject.

"I have no intention of making such an assignment," he said. "Make your own choice, write your thesis, and if you have any problems that you cannot handle by yourself bring them to me."

I bethought me of the white villages I had seen as I sailed those clear September days up the St. Lawrence. Partly for geographic reasons but largely for romantic ones I began to write on the social geography of that charming community. I never really asked Atwood an-

other question about the thesis but, some years later, presented him with an acceptable dissertation.

Ward was a pleasant but very formal man. He was an exact scientist in every sense of the word, and he was exacting. For a time he seemed so finicky that I lost hope of ever pleasing him. I was a rather careless youth. Finally I took a new tack. For conferences we used to sit opposite each other over a narrow table. There I would find Ward waiting for me. I came in this time exactly on the hour, sorted my cards carefully, evened up the piles so as to be parallel to the edge of the desk, put my feet together, straightened my coat, and then with my hands in my lap I began to speak first about point A, then B, and finally concluded with point C. I looked up to find Ward all smiles. I had won a friend. He then set about teaching me what I know about the organization of factual material for research purposes.

Outside the department I knew none of the staff except Mr. Robinson, the Secretary of the Graduate School. He was a gentleman farmer who had achieved the burning ambition of every gentleman within a hundred miles of Harvard Square, that of being connected with the staff of the university. He was a remarkable man. Always calm, he had somehow the power to subdue even my exuberance as he looked at me steadily with his one good eye. His office was completely Harvard. It bore little evidence of his administrative duties. It was paneled in white and lined with beautifully bound volumes of classical erudition. I would introduce myself. He would halt me and slowly say:

"I know who you are. I have been expecting a call from you. You wish to take another course. I approve that request. Have you any further business with me?"

Good Lord, if I had had further business with him he



would certainly have known it ahead of time! Years later I wrote him about credentials of some sort. To his letter he added the postscript, "and I also remember your thesis as a creditable piece of work." By curious chance he edited a manuscript of mine for the Harvard University Press. Occasionally he would make scholarly additions to it.

The manuscript was of recent years. It brought me into another characteristic chamber of the Yankee Court. The manuscript was to be published by the Harvard University Press, and I was to contribute several hundreds of dollars to its production. I called at the editorial offices in Quincy Street, as I supposed, to sign contracts and arrange about returns on the book. I was graciously received in what had once been a drawing room. The atmosphere lingered.

"It is chilly out today. Wouldn't it be pleasant to have a fire in the grate and tea?"

"It would."

So we had tea and gentle conversation. Somewhat embarrassed to bring business to so delightful a company I nevertheless edged around to the subject. Adroitly I was held off. I left without signing a contract, learning of my returns or obtaining a receipt for my money. The book was, of course, published; but, understand, between two gentlemen of Harvard training these bald, legal documents are both unnecessary and in bad taste.

If I learned how to consort with the royalty of the court, I never learned how to get along with the New England youth. I roomed easily with two delightful westerners. One was my old comrade Donald Breed. He was at Harvard accomplishing the seemingly impossible feat of taking law and working in Baker's theatrical Workshop simultaneously. My other roommate was the anthropologist Edward Smith Handy of Cazenovia, New York. To the

average Harvard student central New York State was west of the Hudson and was to be classed with Idaho. We three had the same type of humor and got along famously. We had a common living room where there was always a fire in the grate and the makings of tea or, if you knew where to look for it, a bottle of wine. We had separate and remote study rooms. These were inviolate, and our social contact was always in the common room or at meals.

We ate at an architectural monstrosity known as Memorial Hall. Fourteen of us shared a table and a waiter—eleven gentlemen and three westerners. We three were, I believe, pleasant enough, outgoing fellows, but we never made any headway against the frigidity of Massachusetts reserve. Because an extra dish was once served at dinner I made a feeble joke about its being Johnny Harvard's birthday. My tablemates merely lowered their papers and glowered at me. I remember once when a lonely soul, facing one of these rows of journals, took a match and set fire to them. The series of *Boston Transcripts* was well ablaze before the readers were diverted from their editorials. I wish I could have met the rebellious incendiary.

Once at breakfast a tablemate rose to shake hands with us all. I could get no clue to his action, for his friends merely said, "Luck" or "Carry on." After he had gone I inquired into the extraordinary behavior. Finally one man lowered his paper at my insistence and grunted, "Gone to France. Ambulance service." Lord, I should have had a brass band down to see me off—or after Harvard, should I?

I could ignore the Harvard crowd. Breed and Handy were to me kindred souls and had fine humor. Come Friday or Saturday, we would catch a train out of South Station for some point unknown. For the day, or two days at a time, we would tramp New England roads. In Octo-

ber we looked forward to stealing chilled apples from the tree. In the winter after miles of snowy lanes we would ease ourselves before the fire of some inn.

One afternoon when we were grinding for June examinations, Breed, who knew every official departure, dashed in to say that if we hurried we could catch the boat for Rockland, Maine. Never questioning why or wherefore, we tossed books into the air and old clothes into rucksacks and were off. For three days we did the coast on foot between Rockland and Portland. Though the poem was out of season we all knew well that rare combination of comradeship and wanderlust:

Three of us without a care  
In the red September  
Tramping down the roads of Maine,  
Making merry with the rain,  
With the fellow winds a-fare  
Where the winds remember.

Tired, hungry and wet from a rain, we bore down on a cozy port on a sea cove.

"How do you call this town?"

"We call it Friendship."

"Can you make a clam chowder?"

"This, my friends, is where clam chowder was invented."

The summer between my two years at Harvard I received a generous scholarship for travel. I went into the St. Lawrence country to do research for my thesis, living in the habitant cottages and understanding with difficulty the seventeenth century Norman and Picard French which is spoken there. My first experience with crystallization of old words and habits had been among the mountain men of North Carolina. Here was even more distinct preserva-

tion of the past. In the lower St. Lawrence not only was a quaint language preserved, but ancient practices of farming and the arts, even the feudal system, still held.

There one often found the medieval frame of mind. This was especially true in matters religious. I think the chapter on religion was the best of my thesis, and the one done most sympathetically. Yet Harvard, which had been so generous in intellectual matters, deleted that chapter before I published my work for fear of religious controversy. The study absorbed me. I have written its interesting points too many times to reiterate here. But also, mind you, I was once more exploring my world.

With a comrade, I had worked my way to Tadoussac on the north shore. At each village (for Canada was at war) a sentry came to inquire our business. At Tadoussac the sentry was ill and we got beyond the town without the formalities. Then the sentry apparently became worried and called out the army. The army consisted of a French Canadian lieutenant and three soldiers. They discovered us on a lonely cove sketching—a perfect set-up for spies. They arrested us, and we returned to our quarters in Les Escoumains. The street was crowded to witness our execution. Once back to our rucksacks, we produced papers which proved our innocence. The lieutenant bowed and was sorry that he had arrested us. We bowed and were sorry that the lieutenant had been put to the trouble of arresting us.

But the townsfolk were not convinced. The lumberjacks, I could see, were planning a week-end party of a hanging followed by gin or straight whiskey. So the next morning we slipped out of town on a small tug bound for the south shore forty miles away. I went to sleep on the deck of the tug in the warm sun. Suddenly there was a mighty heave to our progress. A whale, larger than the

tug, had come up for air directly under us. Disaster seemed to dog us — or should I say, “whale us”?

I had been a teaching assistant at Radcliffe while at Harvard. I have little impression of those days, except that the girls seemed uniformly to have unnecessarily large legs as supports. I later became an Austin Teaching Fellow in Harvard itself. Thus these two institutions helped me financially. But the teaching I did meant that I was not permitted full credit for my studies. Therefore, at the end of three years of graduate work I had only arrived at the point of taking general examinations on my studies. The thesis would have to wait.

I have sat in a good many doctor's examinations in my day. There are two types of examiners. One humanely tries to discover how much the student knows. The other endeavors to show how much more he knows than the student. I had but one of the latter in my group. The others were most considerate. I came to the examination well primed. My mind was clicking. Never before, and I hope never again, shall I have my brain crammed with so many facts. No course in oceanography was given at either institution I had attended. The examiners knew it. Yet the second type of professor pleased to examine me in this subject, which was apparently a hobby with him. For one-half hour I consistently declared I knew nothing of oceanography. Finally I was asked how fast the Gulf Stream passed through the Straits of Florida.

I replied, “Five miles an hour, sir.”

His eyes opened, “And where did you learn that fact?”

“It is in Mahan,” I said.

“Then you have read a book on oceanography.”

“I have read a number of them,” I said, “but I made no attempt to prepare on that subject for the examination.”

By that time I was a nervous wreck. All my fine detail

was gone from my mind. I limped through the remainder of the two hours. When I left I did not care whether I had passed or not. But the professors were kindly and I was passed. As a teacher I have never forgotten the lesson I learned that day.

Now life is not orderly. Things do not, all of them, happen in consequence of something else. Some things—some terrible things—just happen. My beloved sister Barbara died. She was scarcely past thirty. She was the mother of three bonny boys and the hostess of a gracious home in Stamford, Connecticut. Margaret was that year studying portrait photography in the Clarence White School in New York. It was a most interesting experience for her. The school was the only one in the country devoted to artistic photography. Max Weber, who has contributed so much to modern art, was one of the instructors. And Margaret was living at the home of John C. and M. Jean MacLane Johansen, both artists of distinction. As much as my pocket-book would allow, I spent week ends there with her. I was to teach at Wellesley, and Margaret was to have a studio, and side by side we were to march to success. Barbara was tremendously interested—she loved both of us with a characteristic warmth—and I was always proud to bring Margaret to her home. We planned a good get-together, and I left carefree and gay for New York. At Stamford I stopped to telephone Barbara while the train was in the station. She had just died of a streptococcus infection. No other death has ever so shocked me. I had not realized that the young could die.

Something happened to me that day. In the first place it brought Margaret and me out of an idyllic dream, and made life and our love for each other something very real. But if Barbara, with a sort of immortality, went on in our lives and increased our sense of the depth of love, still

there was a permanent feeling of loss. There was forever something gone of human warmth, of fineness that mitigated the wistfulness all men feel. There is nothing that one can do about death except to live out some fulfillment the dead might have wished. Mohammed had a beloved son of nine who died. As he patted down the fresh earth on the grave he said, "This does the dead no good nor harm, but eases the afflicted heart."

The other event that changed the current of my life was the war. In April of my second year at Harvard our nation declared war. Even before the declaration I was not neutral, but felt that enlistment must wait until I concluded my residence work for the doctorate. Also I was confused. My engagement to Margaret now was of three years' standing, and I owed something to her. She arrived in Cambridge the day of my examination. We went out to one of the stone balconies that project from the subway bridge over Back Bay, and watched the lights on the water. A good many lovers, I suspect, have settled their problems on those balconies. It seemed that the best way I could serve her was by serving a cause we both believed in. That was Friday. I enlisted in the Harvard Officers Training Corps on Monday and was hurrying to Chicago the next week end for our wedding.

## IX

### WAY TO ARMAGEDDON

I<sup>N</sup> 1917 we were a thoughtless generation of young people. We had no worry for the future. We all anticipated jobs, and it was merely a question of a good training for whatever profession we chose. The matter of patriotism had never been brought to our attention. We did not have a Dies Committee or purges. My first patriotic emotion came as a boy, when, seated high on my father's shoulders so as to see over the crowd, I had cheered the boys in blue returning from the Spanish American War. After that I had a picture of the battleship *Maine* on my wall, and I remember a soprano aunt singing the popular war ditty of the time, "Oh, break the news to mother, and tell her how I love her."

We were not of the mind of today when such phrases as national consciousness, population pressure, and *Lebensraum* have special significance. I do not believe that we had the word "propaganda" in our young vocabularies. We were not even concerned with national social problems. Technocracy had not yet raised its ugly, artificial head. There were no alphabetical agencies for relief. Capital and labor were not yet at each other's throats. There were only wooden fences about the factories, not steel barricades guarded by barbed wire and machine guns. Social problems in America were hardly yet crystallized. In-



ternational discussions were found largely in impersonal textbooks.

For this reason the impinging of the war upon our peaceful world was startling, but it in no way impressed us with its full import. To many of us the war seemed merely an opportunity to express personal idealism. The death that war implied was somehow remote. A Harvard friend, Dick Sadler, said to me, "Rod, I do hope that I can die well." It was as easily said as that. I never learned Dick's fate; but if he died, he died well. Young Kenneth MacLeish, the brother of Archibald, died an aviator. He was one of the fine crop of college youth prepared for life, not death, that the universities had just graduated. Kenneth wrote home what was to be his letter of farewell. It read:

If I find it necessary to make the supreme sacrifice, always remember this—I am so firmly convinced that the ideals I am going to fight for are right and splendid ideals that I am happy to be able to give so much for them. I could not have any self-respect, I could not consider myself a man, if I saw these ideals defeated when it lies in my power to defend them.

So I have no fears! I have no regrets; I have only to thank God for such a wonderful opportunity to serve Him and the world. No, if I must make the supreme sacrifice I will do it gladly, and I will do it honorably and bravely, as your son should, and the life that I lay down will be my preparation for the grander, finer life that I shall take up. I shall live!

You must not grieve. I shall be supremely happy—so must you—not that I have "gone west," but that I have bought such a wonderful life at so small a price and have paid for it so gladly.

We were of the Ian Hay psychology; that is, we all wanted to be in the First Ten Thousand. Each of us was eager to be the one to dribble the soccer football before the advancing ranks. Of course, some of us were more thoughtful. One of my friends was a conscientious ob-

jector. If I did not agree with him then, I can admire him now. He was a man of highest principle and, with head up, went to Leavenworth Prison. His son, born while he was confined, must now feel pride in his father's sacrifice. Some of my friends hastily married to escape the draft. They sold Liberty Bonds, and one added to his duties by raising money for a fraternity house. It was not understandable to me at the time, but I realize now that war is wrong. The continuance of life and happiness is right. And, be it said without rancor, most of those who stayed home are better off financially than I am. That so many in my crowd did not go to war was probably due to the fact that they were twenty-five years of age or more. The high idealism of twenty declines rapidly. The younger crowd then in my fraternity chapter enlisted to a man. With courage and lightheartedness they chose aviation.

My case was different. My parents were intense patriots and were leaders of democratic thought. And this was a war to make the world safe for democracy—which it did not. My whole training, my sense of the adventure of life, my emotionalism, led me inevitably and directly to Armageddon. Even before Ambassador Page in England had sent the fateful and, of course, secret telegram to President Wilson saying that we must fight to maintain our economic standards of living, I had decided to prepare. A number of friends, including Robert Redfield, had gone into the ambulance service abroad. So before declaration of war I had begun to train in the evenings with Breed and Handy, on the battleship *Georgia* which lay at dock in the Charlestown Navy Yard. It never occurred to us to think with the fine cynicism that marks youth today; rather than sceptical we were impulsive. We were Arthurians and hastened to buckle on our armor.

I enlisted in the Harvard Reserve Officers Corps. It was

an aristocratic organization. The usual disciplinarian drills and a lot of unnecessary wigwagging and the Morse code were looked upon as but steps to command. We lived in the dormitories and would march with a good deal of swagger to Soldiers' Field behind a band. I became a mapping instructor. We were trained by French officers with front-line techniques. They taught us how to mop up the enemy wounded. One crawled with a knife in the teeth. But one does not crawl on hands and knees, for such a position—try it—puts the bumpus as the highest part of the body. And if there is anything a soldier hates, it is to return from the wars with a wound in the rear end. So we lay on our bellies and dragged ourselves with our elbows a quarter of a mile at a time. I had great curiosity, but never dared ask whether one stabs a wounded man in the neck or the bowels. In the bowels, I suppose, for at bayonet drill our sergeant said there must be guts at both ends of the bayonet.

My first week end, I went to Chicago for our wedding. War excitement and informality, as well as a class reunion near by, filled the church. I was fond of my Aunt Hazel, the large heroine of the Bond Avenue fire, but I dreaded her tendency to weep copiously and loudly when happy. At the church door a crowd had gathered about us. Suddenly they gave way and there came Hazel, barging down on me like a galleon under full sail, and with tears washing down her face. I laid her head on my shoulder, patted her, and said: "There, there! It isn't as bad as all that."

The next morning we left for Cambridge. I carried with me a newspaper column about our wedding, headed by the ambiguous line, "Romance Ends in Marriage." I was, of course, afraid that our new relationship would be discovered and smiled upon by our fellow travelers. As I gave the conductor my long ticket I tried to appear nonchalant.

I pulled out the strip and handed it to him in an offhand manner. He read and read. I dared not look up. Finally he raised his voice so that the entire car could hear and said, "My friend, this is a very interesting account of your wedding, but where is your ticket?"

We began married life in an apartment on the Charles River opposite the monument which says that just to this point did the early Vikings penetrate. On such a false note did our marriage begin. I had commissioned Breed and Handy to furnish the rooms as cheaply as possible. They did. They bought up secondhand student furniture. But the prize acquisition was a strip of rug eighteen feet long and eighteen inches wide. This was the first thing that attracted our attention as I carried my bride across the threshold. It lay diagonally from corner to corner, dividing the room into equal triangles, but going absolutely nowhere. I carried my bride down its full length as if it had been a tightrope. There was one other rug in the room, a hooked affair. We had a visitor and I told her, "Sally, if there is anything I cannot stand it is a hooked rug."

Without tact she replied, "I tried to tell Mother so."

The war had so hastened our marriage that Margaret had not had time to complete her domestic training: her cooking was, shall I say, experimental. When she was near tears I explained how much I enjoyed this dish and that, and by chance named dishes that we had one night when invited out. At that, she was far advanced over Mother as a bride. Mother's first dessert was flavored with Perry Davis Pain Killer in place of vanilla.

I was to go away on a week's trip to the shooting range. Margaret walked with me to where the transport trucks were waiting. I had a gun over one shoulder and a huge blanket roll balanced on the other. I walked with a newly acquired military stride, so that my diminutive bride must

hang on to my arm to keep abreast of me. The strange thing about that picture is that we were superlatively happy. Our eyes shone with eagerness: were we not embarking upon a crusade? Alas, it was a crusade of whose cause, character and conclusion we knew nothing. Such idealistic steps to war may never be taken again. Youth today is too well informed, too realistic. What happened, in 1918, in France spoiled the fun of future wars.

After three weeks at Cambridge a wire summoned me to Washington to learn military mapping. Geologists all have certain knowledge of plane-table surveying and topography. Margaret went with me as far as Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where John Johansen was to paint my portrait as a wedding present. His wife (Jean MacLane) had painted a fine portrait—much in the spirit of Whistler—of Margaret as a young girl. Permitted only three days, John did well with a poor subject. We have today a large canvas of a young man in khaki with a determined line about the lips.

Washington was an interlude, and soon I was mapping around Camp Grant, Illinois, for the Geological Survey. But I was not in uniform, and the officership held out to me seemed far away. There appeared to be little chance of getting to the front. I wired for permission to enlist as a private in a mapping company about to leave for France. I arrived at Camp Devens, Massachusetts, three hours after the company had left, left with my old friend Paul among their number. I was then made first sergeant of Company B of the Twenty-ninth Engineers. A top sergeant is supposed to be a son-of-a-gun, but I am afraid I was a rather compassionate son-of-a-gun. I worked desperately hard, partly from sense of duty and partly to forget. Margaret came to Boston to be near the cantonment just as my grandmother had done in the Civil War.

One night in late January we worked without sleep.

That winter had been a terror for snow and cold. Men had frozen their noses and ears on drill. In such a frigid dawn the company was routed out. It was to me a very dramatic moment. I stood before the two hundred and fifty men, fully equipped to the last tent peg, heard the reports of "All present" snapped out by the six platoon leaders, and gave the order to march. Without other sound in the silent morning, the men marched in step with a *crunch*, *crunch* over the hard snow as we started for France. At dawn the next morning I stood on the icy deck of the ship, watching the towers of New York. Suddenly I had a vision of what we were going into. I was unhappy, not for myself, but for the poor fools below decks who were hilariously singing, "Over there, over there," with no idea of what they were getting into or what it all meant.

The transport service was not functioning properly when we sailed. The boat was ill equipped to take us. It was a banana freighter, built for speed and narrow in the beam. How it could roll! We sailed into a January storm, and the men, having had a farewell gorge on chocolate candy, passed completely out. Moreover, the ship's grub was contemptible. No transport is expected to be a joy ride, and of course the men were herded below deck like cattle. They slept on shelves four deep, and the only fresh air for the hundreds came from a small, canvas funnel which filtered its air through a latrine before it came to the men. As the decks were awash and dangerous, the soldiers crowded the latrine to escape the black hole of Calcutta. Some men did not eat for two weeks, and I think some were unconscious more or less for the same period. We carried the sickest up to the open deck to revive them with fresh air. Medical assistance was inhumanly arrogant and consisted mostly of administering explosive physics. The latrines became stopped up but not

so the body functions. I saw dung and urine wash over the bodies of the sweltering sick as they lay on the floor-level bunks.

The ship's kitchen was directly above our sleeping deck so that the smells of the food prepared by forcing steam through the material to be cooked permeated the men's quarters. Food when ready was slopped into cans such as we use for garbage. This in itself was suggestive. A lurch of the ship tumbled a dozen large cans of bread pudding down the stairs to where the men were. It was as if a giant had vomited. Soured bread pudding lay ankle-deep over the sleeping deck. The boys, sick and well, piled up and out like rats from a sinking ship. I sent down a squad to clean up the mess. They came up green and hung over the rail. I ordered another squad into the breach. The corporal replied, "You can shoot us if you want to, but we will not go down." There was a grand sergeant named Waters, a fellow out of the Forestry Service, huge and with size thirteen shoes. I gathered him to me, and the two of us armed with deck brooms and shovels and singing at the top of our lungs slithered about in bread pudding until it was mopped up.

All this was hard for me to take. I was willing to die in a joust, but I had not counted on human offal and giant vomit. Because of my noncommissioned rank I had, it was true, better food than the men, and I was well. To distract myself I worked all day and sat up half the night listening while an old army sergeant told adventure stories. He could swear more continuously and more smoothly than any other man I ever knew. There was one fine way of escape. A call came for volunteers to man an improvised crow's-nest that was perilously high on the foremast. The regular crow's-nest was easily reached by the shrouds, but this one called for a straight-up climb on a ladder fastened

to the mast. It was a stunt to reach it, what with the lurching of the ship. Once there, I had grand fun describing great arcs through the sky. I was always happy when my turn came because then I was free from the sick, disheveled, unshaven mass of humanity. I was first up to watch for a rendezvous with our convoy. Ah! I spied a low, rakish craft in the offing and reported the same to the bridge. Back came the reply from the captain: "Fine, son. I saw it a half-hour ago."

I had one grand experience on submarine watch. Literally lining the decks were stations where men watched for submarines night and day. Some stood watch on the bridge as extra eyes; the authorities took no chances. The storm became terrific, and there were few men well enough to do watch duty. As I was too busy to be sick and anyway was not a bad sailor, I found myself on the bridge in the morning from midnight to four. I have seen some bad storms but nothing like this. The boat would struggle over the crest of a great wave and then, lifting its rattling propeller out of the water, would actually coast down the water's slope to bury its nose in the next oncoming mountain of water. The night was pitch-black, and it was raining. It seemed as if solid water broke over the superstructure on which I stood. A ship's officer and I stood together for company and clung to the railing. At times it seemed as if the bridge might go. The officer shouted in my ear, "Man, if we have to die, this is a grand way to go." No one less than a Wagner could have written the accompaniment to the wind and the sea. That was the night that they picked up one of the guards rolling about the deck with a broken jaw.

We were tossed about for twenty-one days on winter waters, zigzagging to avoid torpedoes—our three boats and a battleship. As we neared France six fox-terrier destroyers



bounced out to meet us. Suddenly one let out a smoke screen, and we turned to run back west for two days. Brest was the most welcome, the calmest haven into which I had ever sailed.

Our officers were delightful men but were recruited from the Geological Survey and knew little about matters military. Everything was always left to me. At Brest we engineers were told to unload the freight cargo of our ship. As first sergeant, I was made first unloader. I lined the men up and asked whether any one knew a donkey engine from a donkey. Some did, and some knew knots and hitches. The sea-weary boys were magnificent, and they took the job from my untrained hands.

It took three days by train to reach our interior station. We were packed in coaches where there was no room to lie down. For three nights we slept sitting up, first all leaning this way and then all leaning that way. We had cold bully beef and crackers to eat. At intervals along the way the French had dug trenches, and hundreds of men at a time would pile out to defecate. The army seemed to have reduced life to uncharming essentials. To my consternation I discovered fourteen cases of mumps among the crowded boys and one acute case of appendicitis. Both were simple to diagnose. There was no American provision for the sick en route, and we had not yet proper liaison with the French. I saw a chance American medical officer at a station. In my faulty French I demanded that the train be held while I dumped the sick men on the astonished officer's hands. I never saw the men again though I learned that the appendectomy was successful.

All military journeys begin and end at two in the morning because of some inherent stupidity that characterizes army life. We arrived at Langres at just such an hour.

For purposes of defense, the old Roman town had been placed on the highest, steepest hill in the Saddle of Burgundy. The train pulled in one snowy winter night at the station at the bottom of the hill. My officers as usual disappeared—in an auto. I was left with the task of getting the stiff, cold and often sick men up the small mountain. Each started out with forty-five pounds of equipment, though by the end of the march many of us were carrying the rifles or packs of the less able. When we reached the *caserne* in the town, the men were told that they could find quarters on the fourth floor. At the idea of further climbing a groan went up from the ranks. The men refused breakfast and threw themselves on the bare floor to sleep.

It was now dawn, and a soft snow lay over the town. I had had enough, for my compassion was exhausted. I stole silently over the newly fallen snow and found my way through the beautiful medieval town to the cathedral. At that hour it was deserted. Entering the building hesitantly and on tiptoe, I sat down to restore my soul. I had come a long way—in a sense farther than I had ever come before. I had seen a fine company of youth treated as cattle because of what we call the exigencies of war, and the temper of my idealism had been sorely tested. I felt very much alone, but for the first time in months I knew the peace that comes with privacy.

## X

### REACTION TO WAR

THERE are a good many ways in which one can write of war. When Ian Hay wrote *The First Ten Thousand* he glorified courage, and he was, of course, right, just as was the gallant Alan Seeger who went to his "rendezvous with Death at some disputed barricade." The group of fine men with whom I went to the front were eager to prove themselves in battle. Technically we were observers, and therefore noncombatants; nevertheless, many of our boys would volunteer to go on the weekly raiding parties with the infantry. There were plenty of brave men among our group. At Camp Devens I had offered the name of a responsible person, Daniels, for a sergeantship; but Captain Hodgeson, a fatherly sort of person, had taken a fancy to an immature, pink-cheeked lad named MacDonald, and gave him the warrant. The captain was right; and so was I. Daniels lost his arm in a moment of bravery. MacDonald was in an improvised observation post with another boy when a shell badly wounded the boy and destroyed his gas mask. Mac, with no further thought, put his own mask on the wounded friend and carried him to safety. Mac became a pitiful casualty from mustard gas but now was a man in his own right.

Then again one can write about war in the Dos Passos manner. Hay and Dos Passos were both propagandists in

their way. Dos Passos hated war, and in his *Three Soldiers* went the limit to show its degradation of the human being. I saw that side too—saw the Battle of Paris, as we called it, and the revolting skirmishes of the little manure towns in which we were quartered. In Langres the men used to stand in long queues waiting to get into the whorehouses, and the officers before the higher priced places. Several times I had the task of “convoying” men to the venereal camps, usually youngsters who had been diffident about going to a public prophylactic station.

Get this, you women, and get it well! If you are ever inclined to push men into a recruiting parade behind some band, at the same time sit ye down and weep. Remember that the first thing war does is to break down the feeling for the sanctity of life. After that everything goes. Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. Wine, women and song—though some soldiers don’t sing. I was lucky to be idealistically in love.

There is yet another approach to the realities of war, that of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. I saw a bit of that, too. I remember passing a pretty-faced boy lying dead beside the road with his guts spilled out close to the wheel track. I came back that night. It had rained during the day and the boy was still there but the trucks had covered his entrails with mud. Not a pleasant picture, but the truth is that perhaps it wasn’t so bad to be dead as to be wounded by a jagged fragment of shell. I had a friend who drove an ambulance. He used to roar with laughter as the bumps made the wounded scream. After all, you couldn’t expect a fellow to sit there and cry—he wouldn’t have been able to drive the car. For the best description of that war read Vera Brittain’s *Testament of Youth*—that is, if you have a large enough capacity for pity. She says: “This winter is not so bad. It is colder and the wounded freeze quicker.”

I myself waged no hand-to-hand battle; I was not called upon to do direct murder. There were times when I thought the enemy artillery had it in for me personally, and there must have been occasions when I was effective in providing the proper range for our own guns; but I never carried out the mopping up which the officers at Harvard taught me. My own story, perforce, is one of what I saw about me: the *esprit de corps*, the willingness to see the thing through, the gallantry and the pathos. You must now forget the moral letdown of the men in the stations back of the front line. Some of the men who behaved like muckers while stationed in the little manure towns or in the larger cities became the most gallant at the front. One can argue that no war is moral; but, given war, our men did magnificently the tasks that were set them. So I must tell the story of how men carried on; how they created a world of almost make-believe from the ugly reality, in order that they might carry on. They laughed hugely at things which were not funny as when, under shelling, a boy deserted his truck and ran with fright. In order to retain one's nerve one must think of anything and everything but the possibility of death. We all strove to hold to a creed of optimism.

The first thing that happened to me at the front fitted into my wishful thinking. I was conducting seventy men in trucks and approaching the front under cover of some woods, the Bois de la Reine near Saint-Mihiel. At the edge of the woods we were called upon to turn the trucks back, dump our luggage, and proceed on foot to a ruined town whose spires were to be seen in the distance. I had ordered the men to straggle out so as not to attract fire. Assembling them again in the village I reported to a strange outfit that was to quarter us for the night. That night a terrific storm of rain and lightning took over the country-

side. I bethought me of the baggage and the two guards in the forest. I went to the captain and laid the case before him. He told me to get a mule driver and four mules and go out in an open wagon. I hardly expected a stranger to spend a night with me in such a storm and asked for an order. "You don't need any order," said the captain. "My men do any job that comes along, and do it willingly." I was cheered. It was a gallant company, this new American army.

In the black-out of the town, with hindering flashes of lightning, we got the mules right end to the wagon and started out. We were both wearing those absorbent paper raincoats that some contemptible profiteer sold the army. We were going against the traffic of the munition trucks coming forward under cover of darkness. Every so often our mules would refuse to go on. Then a flash of lightning would show one of them climbing on the hood of a truck. After we had the baggage we somehow got into an old shell hole filled with water. All together it was a jolly evening. I expected that, once home, I could get off the dripping clothes and roll in my blankets; but I found the blankets had lain under a hole in the roof and were saturated. The mule driver who had shared the night with me had been too good a sport for me to start complaining now.

We formed Flash-Ranging Section Number One, and I was master engineer in charge of operations. We located guns by observation and triangulation. Always there was associated with us a Sound Ranging Section. Location by sound worked best in windless fogs and we worked best in clear weather, so we complemented each other. It was at night that the flashes of the guns could be seen like small, local heat lightning. By electrical synchronization we got a number of observers on a single gun. We knew accurately the location of our posts and had them plotted on a

large map on a zinc table. From the observers' bearings we could then triangulate and so discover the gun locations. In the daytime we were busy watching troop movements, locating fresh trench dirt, and finding out many secrets of the enemy.

As a matter of fact, each side knew much of the other. As we were a branch of the Intelligence Service, we received not only the printed American and French orders for the day, but just as regularly the German orders. The efficiency of our service made it a most satisfactory one to work for. You felt actually important. The four observation posts were scattered over the front for a distance of six miles or more. They were located in hilltop dugouts, in church towers and even in trees. Ideally they were situated between the artillery and the infantry. Sometimes the artillery would work up ahead of us and so blind us with their flashes. Sometimes the only suitable position for a post was ahead of the first trenches—this bore a sporting risk.

It was beautiful May as we went to the front. The fallow fields were knee-deep in grass. There was a fruit tree in bloom just outside the central station. It was a quiet sector used for the training of troops. But even here there was a weekly barrage during which raiding parties invaded enemy territory for information. The first strafe came from the Germans. I slept in the stall of a stable but had a telephone so that I could be summoned to central station quickly, and I was asleep when the barrage began. I snuggled down under the blankets but the phone rang me to action. It was beautiful moonlight but man was raising hell. I stole along through the streets feeling that if I kept in the shadows I was safe. At such times only fools are unafraid. Later, however, all this became commonplace. We learned to assume that if a shell didn't hit you, you had

nothing to worry about, and if a shell did hit you, why, then worries were over.

After a month of mild adventures we were rushed to the Château-Thierry salient in the Belleau Woods sector. The Fifth and Sixth Marines were still there making their desperate and historic stand. One of the marine officers told me how their major had cried to the men just before they made contact with the enemy, "Boys, the Old Guard never retreats."

One boy shouted back, "But the Old Guard had ammunition."

After a bit the marines shared a copse of woods with us. Some warning sent them chaotically running to the front line, loading their rifles as they ran. One sight nearly broke me down. I saw a young boy, too young for service, run a few steps, then kneel by a stump, hastily scribble a letter of some farewell with the stub of a pencil, thrust it into his blouse, and run on.

It was in that woods that I was wounded. We had been rushed into the section before the quartermaster had made provision to feed us. All the food that we had was what the French had discarded in retreat: corned beef that hurt your mouth when you ate it, black bread and imitation coffee. For twenty-one meals we tried to eat the stuff. We were ravenous, but what we refused for supper appeared as our breakfast. I was sitting in the woods in a kitchen chair trying to down the stuff when the chair legs sank into the leaf mold, tumbling me and forcing my hand onto a dirty nail. One cannot suck clean a wound in the palm of the hand, and I promised myself that I would have it looked after. So I walked to a first-aid dressing station that was in a ruined church. Some gassed men, looking for the moment as healthy as I, walked in at the same time. I was offered a chair, and, could I believe what I saw, I was



brought a hot meal including cocoa on a tray. I ate with rapaciousness and avidity. An orderly came along to ask where I was wounded. Sheepishly I showed him my hand. I have a memory of being helped from God's house rapidly, disgraced but gorged.

Each observation station was manned by a sergeant and three squads. Three men would be on duty in the post at a time, several men would patrol the communication lines, while the rest would be at a billet a mile or so to the rear, resting and cooking. The boys were mostly engineering students and a trustworthy lot. But we knew that when they were exposed to too much nerve-racking danger their observations were not accurate. On the other hand, lest they be thought not courageous they would not confess any hardships to the officers. Therefore, though I spent the nighttime in central station co-ordinating the work, in the daytime I visited the billets to see how things were going. The rest of the time I slept. One such visit took me to a billet in a largish town. Waters was sergeant there and, as guide, met me at the edge of the place. As we walked down the street the place was being heavily shelled. I suggested that we step into a cellar until the shelling died down.

"Oh, no!" drawled my Texan friend. "They keep this up all the time." I expected to find the boys huddled in safety. Not so, for without helmets or gas masks they were sitting in a circle in the courtyard, tossing pennies into a kitty while they bet on which sector of the town would be struck next. Their referee was one of the boys astride the ridgepole of a house and wearing a derby hat which he doffed to each shell as it whizzed over. "*Bon jour*, Mr. Fritz." And then he would yell out the area shelled.

There was a beautiful château on the brow of the hill immediately above Belleau Woods. I laid the wires out

to it the night of the second battle of that shell-torn forest. The world was alive with fireworks. The artillery down the hill was wheel to wheel, and the shells going not too far overhead made cracks that seemed to lift one's helmet. The night was bright with rockets and Very lights. I passed two dead American boys behind a log, lying together spoon-fashion as if for comfort as they died. We crawled over French dead to go through a break in the courtyard wall. At the time this all did not seem out of the way. I was getting hardened.

Soon we had equipped an upstairs room of the château as an observation place. The Germans shelled it unmercifully, not because they knew of the observation post but because the high chimney was a point of triangulation for map-making and so was an exact location for an artillery test. Apparently the French owners had fled precipitately, for the beautiful building was completely furnished; the fine porcelain, the clothes, the library—all were there. Because we did not wish to disclose our use of the place we sent out a watch of men who remained twenty-four hours on duty. To keep the boys diverted from the shelling the sergeant would invent games. He took the walnut dining-room furniture into a loathsome but safe cellar under the stable. Here he would serve cold stew in fine Limoges ware, which the boys would smash against the wall rather than clean. And every one must come to so gala a festival in fancy dress. It would be a dress suit, or a Paris gown, or preferably a boudoir cap and some lingerie over a dirty uniform.

One billet was a farmhouse, overlooked by destruction. It had in it a stove, and when the boys would imprudently cook their meals the Germans would shell, thinking that they had located the headquarters of at least a general. When I first saw it, the enemy had disposed of the barn,

the haystack and the second floor of the house. There was an American battery down the hill whose shells literally passed the windows. The clap of the air filling in the vacuum made by the shells was nerve-racking to say the least. There were always shells passing the house in one direction or another. The men were outwardly calm but really under great tension. The rusty whisper of the shells passing overhead did not bother them, but when one took a deeper note and then began to whistle downward, almost instantaneously every boy fell through a trapdoor into a vegetable cellar. It got so that if any one made a quick move, such as to take the teakettle from the stove, everybody else fell through the trapdoor. I decided that they ought to move. But no, this place was all right, just like home. You see, in the cellar they had it all fixed up: plenty of hay to sleep on; one boy had a nail for his blouse, and another a shelf for his tobacco. They had no intention of moving and told me so.

A few days later I got a call on the phone. It seemed that the boys wanted to move immediately. It was this way—they had had a pot of rice on the stove and the Germans, attracted by the smoke, had begun shelling. When they came back from the cellar they found to their horror that a fragment of shell had pierced two sides of the pot without dislodging it from the stove and “the goddamned Germans had burnt the rice.” There were a lot of atrocities and horrors of war of which the Hague Conference took no cognizance.

The man I came to know best at the front was Captain Ross. He was a gentleman who belonged in no war. He was a sweet person with an almost pretty face. Before I had gone to the front a cable had made the precious announcement of my son's birth. Now I had a photograph. Ross was a bachelor but shouldn't have been. It would

be after midnight. The night's strafe would hardly have died down. The 155's that were in our backyard would be rattling the shelter, as with terrible regularity they plugged away at the enemy. Reports would be coming in over the phone and shouted to the plotter. The man plotting them would shout the map co-ordinates to the man who phoned them to "Operations." I would be writing my fastest to keep my reports up to the minute. Then Ross would tap me on the shoulder and say, "Peattie, let's see the picture of that baby again." So he and I would stop our war and look the picture all over carefully. One time Ross, a lieutenant, and I were exploring in the fog an area which was really, I suppose, no-man's land. There were some engineers near us digging fox holes to lie in and the Germans, detecting the sound, were shelling at them. The shells were landing harmlessly in a remote portion of the field. The lieutenant and I wanted to give the area of shelling a wide berth. Ross's knees were shaking visibly, but because he was scared he would not deviate one step from a line to his goal. Not too happy about it, we two had to walk with him. This was, of course, a fine show of courage. One day I noticed Ross wearing a new pair of shoes and asked him where he got them. "Off a dead German," said the mild-mannered man. "You know, I got the right size the second try." War was a strange environment for many of us, but somehow even the mildest of men developed a defensive philosophy.

There came three days of silence. It was like the ominous moment before a storm. We lay in a triangular area between the Germans and the Marne, and slept with our shoes on. By chance I was sharing a pup tent with an old Hoosac boy. It was in those nights that I heard the *scuff*, *scuff* of the marching troops that brought to mind that night on Winchester downs. The Germans got worried

and sent planes just over the treetops to bomb and machine-gun us. My only reaction was to be just plain mad. Then one morning before dawn the show began. I had come to have the French psychology that the Germans could never be driven back. Now came the unbelievable news that the Germans were on the run. Each of the four observers was trying to talk from his post at the same time. One would locate a retreating cannon as it dashed across the field. Soon he would call in: "Cease firing. The target's gone up in the air." Our linesmen returned from the front telling how the doughboys were throwing away all their equipment but rifles and were rushing up through the wheat fields. This was unorthodox fighting, and the Germans abandoned their guns and fled. Our rolling field kitchens, filled with hot soup, actually kept up with the front lines. Prisoners filed past the station. Our office was in hubbub. For twenty-six hours I sat at the telephone manipulating a complicated system of wires that led directly to the artillery pits. I rested for a time and had two more long sessions, phoning messages. The enemy was now retreating beyond the far ridge and we had to move to new posts.

Then a motorcycle courier rode up with a telegram for me. Why I, so unimportant, should get this service at such a crucial time I did not know. The message ordered me back to the training school to help prepare the next outfit. It was a letdown, and it was only later I discovered that it saved my life, for during our advance the central station was shelled and the man working where I should have been was blown to pieces.

So my personal war did not call for watches in the trenches and rain. I never had a zero hour which was to take me over the top to bayonet some perfectly worthy German boy. My assistance in killing was all remote and

impersonal. But, if I was not in the thick of it, I saw enough to have great admiration for the common American soldier. I stood on a hilltop with a panoramic view and watched the Americans capture the town of Vaux. I could see the moving barrages, the silencing of enemy artillery and the advancing lines of infantry. Fosdick, the preacher, who had been sent over to investigate the morals of the doughboys, was apparently on the same hill that afternoon. He wired back to the committees that had sent him: "I just saw the doughboys take the town of Vaux. Their morals are fine."

## XI

### ANOTHER "HILLTOP ON THE MARNE"

THE way back for me led through Paris. I had permission to stop over because of some slight military errand, but I entered the town ingloriously. For some reason, now forgotten, I had no seat to my pants. Here was Paris celebrating a victory. Here was I, an American fresh from the scene of battle. Here was I with no seat to my pants. My single chance to be the hero of French femininity but, lo, I was the object of hilarious laughter by every bobbed-haired *cocotte* of the boulevards. Moreover, I had friends in Paris, girls in hospital and ambulance service. I carried letters of introduction to persons in the American colony. Desperately I tried to acquire pants; but pants come from one's own quartermaster, no one else. No quartermaster—no pants. So I hired a fiacre and saw my Paris, seated, waving to the ladies but, with so poor a social background, not daring further venture.

I got to Langres after midnight. Yet the streets were filled with people, standing, whispering in the brilliant moonlight. It was as if the "Miserere" from *Il Trovatore* were about to begin. Never have I been in so unreal a world. Never has the earthly scene been so theatrical. I found myself standing with a group of nuns, and I asked one what it meant. In a tragic whisper the sister replied, "*Les avions. Les avions.*" There had been an air raid.

Back at the training school I was very happy. The school was situated in a fortification sunk almost out of sight in the crown of an isolated hill looking down on the upper Marne. A winding road, such as one might expect knights to ride upon, led up to this Fort Saint-Menge and, indeed, there was actually a drawbridge, though the fort was created only after the Franco-Prussian War. It was of the Vauban school of design with deep dry moats cut in solid rock, slits to enfilade the moat, many gun emplacements, but, of course, no guns. The men lived in underground rooms called casemates, and all the communication alleys were sunken and paved with cobbles. The heavy shoes would echo as the troops came marching in, and it was a grand place to sing. We used to receive word at retreat formation of those who were going to the front with the dawn truck caravan. Waiting for the roll, the boys with grand bass notes used to bellow out:

When the roll is called up yonder,  
When the roll is called up yonder,  
When the roll is called up yonder,  
I'll be there.

There was, as a matter of fact, a good deal of singing in the army. It had been taught us in the cantonments to keep up morale. The worst but most popular song was the slow-sung *Keep the Home Fires Burning*. It always made me dismal. When a march was long and the men got tired I used literally to pommel the reluctant until they would join in:

Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag,  
And smile, smile, smile.

This not for the sentiment so much as the quick time. It would pick up the column and carry it along for a mile or



more. There was one song to which the officers objected, but we sang it because we thought it funny. During those nights waiting for the Château-Thierry drive while we scattered about the woods in pup tents, someone would start up:

I want to go home. I want to go home.  
The bullets they whiz and the cannon balls roar,  
Don't send me to the trenches no more.  
Send me over the sea, where the Hun he cannot get at me.  
Oh, my, I'm too young to die, I want to go home.

We would then throw anything at the singer's tent to quiet him, only to have someone else take up the refrain.

At the fort it was not pup tents. The men were snugly quartered in the casemates. The officers had rooms in long collapsible barracks. I was the only one with a hut to myself. Technically a master engineer is on the staff of the colonel, but we were a battalion with no colonel. A master engineer is an expert who outranks a first sergeant and so does not stand drill; nor does he drill men. As he does not have to discipline the men, he is hail-fellow-well-met with them. Yet he has the respect and friendship of the officers.

So, being neither man nor officer, I was isolated in my own hut. They built it to my design. It had a good bunk, a fine steady table, electric lights, and a stove. I had helped a pitiful little Italian-American soldier, relieved him from some degrading work, and by way of gratitude every night he piled kindling just outside my door for the stove. The only disadvantage of the hut was a corrugated iron roof. The sergeants returning from a wild evening in the village would toss rocks high in the air so that they would come down on the roof. It sounded like nothing less than an air raid. But in the mornings I could see from the

rampart the mists of the valley rise to disclose fourteen scattered red-tiled villages with yellow mustard fields in between. I had at last achieved the privacy whose lack was really my only privation in the army.

Moreover, I was busy. I did the lecturing in the school; directed, if I did not teach, the surveying activities; operated an outdoor range for practice observation; and was in charge of dugout construction and other practical matters. Yet I had time to myself. Evenings I would spend writing up lectures and creating literally a textbook for flash ranging. Sometimes I would have days free, when I would bicycle the countryside. I was very happy. Mostly I remember those days for the friendships and adventures in human contacts. As each company came up for training I did personnel work, interviewing them. Besides picking specialists, I picked friends. The sergeants were a fine lot. We played poker on rainy days, and on Sunday we would go to some village and consume unbelievable quantities of eggs and French fried potatoes.

One of the good boys died of pneumonia, and we marched sadly down the hill to bury him in the village cemetery. It was all right when a salute was fired over him. We stood steady when the Frenchwomen laid wreaths from their gardens on the grave. But when taps was blown and echoed and re-echoed among the hills we broke and cried. And we thought we were tough.

The grandest friend of all was Thompson, a Columbia Ph.D. Though a sergeant he knew more engineering than any half-dozen officers. War had caught him looking for metals in the Belgian Congo. He hastened to Paris to enlist, but found that he must return to America to sign a paper or something. I was attracted to him from the first, but could not get used to his facial structure with its high cheekbones. I could not place it ethnically. I said, one day,

"Thompson, that's a strange face of yours"—men can say that sort of thing to each other.

"This is my second face," explained Thompson. "A mine timber fell on me. I saw it coming but couldn't dodge. It made a pulp out of my face bones. I walked a mile to the doctor's office and then fell unconscious for two weeks. The doctor had never seen me before, so he made me the kind of face he liked. Personally, I never liked this face."

As a matter of fact it was a strong face, one of a man who usually had his way. I, on the other hand, once prevented Thompson from having his way. He was wild to get to the front. I held him back a month in order to teach surveying to a batch of recruits that were coming up. Thompson couldn't believe he was thwarted. People who misbehaved in school were hustled off to the front. To be thus rewarded Thompson took to drink and did a grand job of it. One night he came roaring up the hill. The student companies were quartered in flimsy barracks on a wind-swept portion of the plateau. It was winter, and one man was detailed to remain in each barracks for the day in order to feed green oak into the single stove, nursing some semblance of heat for the boys when they returned in the evening. Thompson dashed into the long structure and tipped the precious stove over. Two hundred half-clad men pursued him out into the rainy night. He doubled back and upset the stove in the second, and then in the third barracks. Six hundred men, mad as hornets, but too cold to continue, returned to their smoke-filled barracks. That was too much for the commandant. Thompson went to the front, where he developed the habit of running transit lines within plain sight of the enemy, just keeping ahead of the artillery; that is, as they got his range he moved on to another station.

I interfered with Fate one other time. With one com-

pany came three expert electricians, each about forty years of age and each an Irishman to the heart of him. They had enlisted together after a lifelong friendship, and they were going to die together. Here was a fellowship such as Kipling would have immortalized. They were inseparable, and I in my ignorance ordered two to the front and retained the other. We did not need three experts in one section. But, begorrah, they would not be divided! They went down the hill that night and got beautifully drunk as only Irishmen can. The village authorities locked them up. They literally took down a side of the jail, and borrowed the mayor's horse and equipage in order to see the countryside. After all one cannot buck Destiny. To the front all three went together, singing.

Then there were the officers. One commandant of the fort was an elderly major with a kind, scholarly face. It occurred to me that I had seen him before and, as we met, I studied him.

He looked back and said, "You must be one of my boys."

"Almost," I replied. "I am a Harvard man, and the first time we met I went before you, saluted, and asked permission to go home to be married." It was Theodore Lyman, Professor of Physics at Harvard. He was a cultured gentleman out of his sphere, and he covered up his essentially unmilitary character by walking about the ramparts of the fort dressed as for battle with a revolver strapped to his leg for quick action. We were two strangers in a world not our own, and I, at least, looked forward to our long talks at night on matters more appropriate to Cambridge than to the A.E.F. We were both lonely and wistful for so many things, things which we held in common.

An entirely different type was a coast artillery major commandant named Currier. He was a genial, swaggering,

roast-beef sort, who stamped about the place, banging his leather puttees with a riding crop. He swore fluently at everybody and would swear at me before the men when I was directing some task or other. Having exhausted his ample vocabulary, he would be most pleasant. He would fine a man heavily for drunkenness or A.W.O.L., and then lend him money for the rest of the month. He had been stationed in Japan and knew all about Japanese art; and in the evenings in his office we would sit late and hold great argument.

These good fellows stand out in my memory. Besides, there were little men and mean ones. Chance made some of them officers, and their new-found authority released them from inferiority complexes and made them insulting and arrogant. Thompson was with me watching such a swaggering, rough-looking individual march up his troops to the school the first day for training. He was overbearing, and his very presence was an offense to our fellowship. "My God!" said Thompson. "My old mule driver." Another little man, a captain, was always too self-important. One night he neglected to put away a letter he had been typing. His bravado had been so great that our curiosity overcame us, and we sergeants sitting about the orderly room seized upon it. It ran: "As I write this letter the shells are bursting about the hut." He was at the time almost ninety miles from a gun.

Life at the fort soon became monotonous. There is an unwritten rule in the army that a soldier after six months in the rear may demand the right to return to the front—nothing official; but it works, and I invoked it. There were a good many things I was teaching wherein I had not had practical experience. I was therefore given a pass to go where I pleased and see what I would for three weeks. I went to an active front before Metz which was a fluctuating

line attained after the Saint-Mihiel salient was straightened out. It was my one experience in territory recovered from the Germans.

Once there I was able to take my turn at night duty in the observation posts, to visit the artillery pits during action and to see this and that. I reported to a flash-ranging section, under no orders, but as a roving observer. In fact, I saw a little too much. One night in a billet I noticed that a sergeant, instead of sending a man to the post, was taking the place himself. I inquired why.

"The man supposed to go out was killed last night," said the sergeant.

"Is that so? Who was he?"

"My brother," he snapped out.

So it turned out that I took the turn of duty. I somehow did not see our young sergeant sitting out all night in a fog with his own thoughts. They gassed us a bit at the post that night. It is difficult to see through a gas mask because the eyepieces sweat so. I tested for gas, decided all was well, and removed the mask in order to carry on the work. I took it off a little too soon and paid for it with a stomach that for a week had the exact weight of lead. You did not report to the medical authorities unless absolutely necessary because then you seldom reached your outfit again and usually ended up unloading boats in Bordeaux or some other equally unattractive task.

The conquered territory was dismal. The Germans had destroyed much in retreat. Our shelling completed the destruction. Towns ranged in character from ruins to brick dust. It was not safe to nose around in strange places. Various sorts of trip bombs and grenades were left about. And the dugouts stank. I never knew whether this stink was from four years of unclean and unhealthy living or from disinfectant. Though I saw a woods full of dead

Germans, our squads, of course, went about to clean up the towns. One night I tried to find quarters in such a town. Our outfit had claimed an old German dugout; but all the bunks were preempted, and the floor was too loathsome to sleep on. The other dugouts seemed full or had gas warnings. So I took to wandering about to wait for dawn. It was raining, and the village square and alleyways were covered with a slime inches deep. The darkness was mitigated only by an occasional Very light in the distance. These give a green and unnatural hue to everything. Other lost souls were wandering about, and we met like Dante's spirits of the damned, cursed each other, and passed on. "A hell of a place, this man's army!" Then I thought of the navy I had planned to join. In the navy, when you come off duty you can step into the galley and have a cup of hot coffee before you turn in. Oh, boy! Oh, boy!

I have told you how I was wounded. This now is the story of how I died. During that last visit to the front I was quartered for a time in a German dugout shaped like a horseshoe. It was built in solid rock, and as there was the high fence of a prisoners' stockade near by I suspected where the labor had come from. Some twenty of our boys lived there. These boys had practically retired from military careers in order to raise pets that the Germans had acquired during four years and then abandoned. The pets ranged from the ubiquitous cootie to cockroaches, rats that ate out of your hand, guinea pigs, rabbits, and one forlorn cat. There were also three odd horses, one an old white mare which was particularly loved. She refused to work, but the boys spoke of "Millie" as an excellent companion. Most of the day was spent foraging for food to feed the zoo.

Now it happened that every half-hour a shell of high caliber would strike the town of Thiaucourt where we

had a dressing station. We were told to locate the gun and I went out to the O Pip (observation post) to help. Soon we had made the location, and I left the regular staff to carry on through the night. I walked along through the mud, feeling a bit lonely, and I came to a ravine junction just at the moment the Germans thought it would be a good time to shell that point. I lay behind some boxes for a time until in a flash I discovered they were ammunition cases. Later, half asleep I fell over a dead and particularly bloated horse. As I went along I pulled first one boot and then the other from the sucking mud. It was a chilly night, but I was warm from effort and had my shirt open at the neck.

Suddenly I realized that I was dead, by some blow so sudden that I had not felt it. It wasn't half bad, this being dead. Actually I was happy, and a pleasant warmth pervaded all. I wasn't sure whether I was on my feet or floating upward—and upward. It was like that superlative comfort of dropping off to sleep in a warm bed. Then I became suddenly alert. I threw out my arms and encircled—the head of the old white mare Millie. She was standing directly before me and breathing warm air in great pulsations from her nostrils down inside my shirt. Now I was thoroughly awake and I knew I was near the dugout, and so Millie and I, almost arm and arm, made our way along—good companions, both of us.

I hardly got back to my hilltop on the Marne when the armistice became imminent. We did not have the false armistice three days before the true one as in America. Margaret described that for me. She was walking down Michigan Boulevard in Chicago when people began to pour from the office buildings and to cut up didos in the street. The city went mad. Through the crowd came an elderly man with a fine, white beard. He was skipping



this way and that, presenting every one with a little American flag. And he was telling them that he had a son and a son-in-law in France. It was Margaret's father. In France we knew, however, that the armistice was coming. I had a washwoman whom I liked. She had said to me: "Monsieur, one day the bells through all of France rang and there was war. One day they will all ring again and there will be peace. You, monsieur, must ring one of those bells."

This I planned to do.

A sergeant named Wilson and I had made a sort of personal capture of a town. It was eleven kilometers from the fort and was isolated on a plateau. A Georgia company had been quartered there for a time and had left the villagers kindly disposed towards Americans, so that we two went often to visit. There was a pleasant inn and a yet more pleasant innkeeper's daughter, who could cook meals over the fire such as one can obtain only in France. Knowing that the armistice was coming, Wilson and I hid ourselves thither and sat in the inn with the village *facteur* waiting Official Peace (a *facteur* is a village officer-of-all-work). His wife came running down the street, without sabots, waving a telegram. We took it to the mayor to have it opened. Peace was declared.

With the *facteur*, the quick-moving, excited little priest and the village fool we two ran up the winding belfry stairs. There, for an hour, we took turns tolling the two great bells. The priest with his ear cocked would listen for tone. If a bell was not rung exactly correctly he would jump into the air to seize the rope and set it aright. We laughed till the tears rolled down our cheeks. The school had been dismissed, and through the slats of the belfry we could see young and old in the square below, hand in hand, dancing in a great circle and singing.

On the way to the inn a woman pulled me into her house and showed pictures of two soldiers. "My peace," she said simply. "My sons. One will come home without an arm and one, monsieur, will never come home."

But at the inn all was more than gay. It seemed that we two Americans had been personally responsible for victory. Everybody embraced everybody else. Even Clare loosened up a bit, and I replied with a fervor beyond the bonds of international amity. That night on our way home Wilson and I crossed the Marne Canal, reflecting the stars between the shadows of the plane trees. We stripped and took a long swim. It helped clear our heads.

We left our beautiful hilltop for the last time Christmas Eve, rolling westward in "40 *hommes* and 8 *chevaux*." I had with me a little wooden box containing the grandest Christmas present I had ever received. It was a plaster model taken from a baby's hand, and beside it was a lock of soft hair. The unreal was over. I was going back to the real. The child that had seemed so remote was now for the first time to me an actuality. It brought my Margaret very close to me. Every man in the car saw the plaster model, handled it, and had thoughts of his own. For me the rails clicked the refrain: "I'm going home. I'm going home."

## XII

### TEN WEEKS AT THREE MILLS AND A SEQUEL

WITH great excitement we left our train of boxcars at Saint-Nazaire and lined up on the dock before a beautiful homebound steamer. Then we were turned about face and taken back into the interior for ten weeks. The Spanish Inquisitors could not have devised a more cruel torture. Why stupidity and blundering are such inevitable concomitants of militarism, I do not know; but perhaps after all it was written by Destiny that I should spend a part of my life in a cottage in Trois Moulins.

Those three mills, which grind grain by the winds sweeping over the low coastal plains of Brittany, formed the center of a remote suburb of the grand old city of Nantes. We arrived there tired and disheartened after miles of trooping over a cobblestone highway. I aided in billeting the men in houses and barns, and put myself up with the last bunch in a great circular windmill tower. We slept in the flour dust with the smell of malt, a half-dozen to each landing of the staircase that led up among the grain chutes to the mechanism at the top. The winter day was short, and so in the darkness we stood about trying to eat stew from our pannikins before it was entirely diluted by the pouring rain.

I now had no close attachment to the company and so next morning started forth to find happier quarters.

Within a half-mile I came to a crossroad settlement. I entered a combined commissary and café of sorts and laid my needs before a jury of wooden-shoed Bretons, men and women, assembled there. There was at first no response. I had approached the subject too abruptly. Then one ancient woman had an idea. I might sleep *chez la Veuve Gilbert*—at the home of the Widow Gilbert. They began quickly talking to one another, telling one another what a *bonne chance* such an idea was. They ignored me completely but fairly danced with the joyousness of the idea. It began to run like a refrain: "*la Veuve Gilbert, la Veuve Gilbert, la Veuve Gilbert.*" They were getting into a groove. If Cab Calloway had been there he might have done something with it.

Not I alone, but the entire group went across the street *chez la Veuve Gilbert*. But I entered first and beheld, as the door opened, one of the sweetest, tiniest women I have ever seen. She was past seventy and not five feet tall. On her head was a white kerchief, darned so finely it might have been lacework. She wore a patched but voluminous skirt. Ah, she was happy that she had so many visitors! She clapped her hands. But that she should take me in was an overwhelming idea. In their persuasive excitement the villagers dropped French for their more familiar Breton. I stood there uncomprehending. Then I shooed them out with thanks and took over my own pleading. We two sat down by the raised hearth before a tiny flame of faggots, and I brought out my pictures of Margaret and my son, Roderick Elia. Ah, so, I had married a small woman, but not so small. And the baby: it was beautiful, a *mignon*. At last came the consent: "Monsieur Bébé, you may stay." And Monsieur Bébé I became to the whole village. Thus began my simple life in Trois Moulins.

The home of the Widow Gilbert consisted of three

rooms. The mistress slept, ate and lived in one room. Daily she went about her tasks in her tiny field garden. I slept in the second room and took long walks to keep in condition and to prevent an almost overwhelming ennui from conquering me. The cow slept in the third room and never went out during the ten weeks I was there. Many French cows die in the stalls of their birth without ever having breathed the open air. In some cases the door which proved entrance for the calf is too small for the grown cow, and thus the butcher must do his task where he can. If this cow had any wanderlust in her soul, she never disclosed it to me, and yet we became close friends.

Madame Gilbert was extremely poor, but in her living room she had a fortune in magnificent antiques. The chest in which she stored wonderful old cloths was of carved walnut polished by centuries of cleaning. Her Jacobean table had a grace which cannot be imitated and character such as comes from long care and use. Fine copper pots hung on the wall, and there was a shelf with images and souvenirs of long-ago Breton *pardons*. The fireplace was most simple but, in its simplicity, beautiful. The raised hearth threw heat properly into the room and provided a place to warm one's feet. But the masterpiece was a huge four-poster bed with a canopy. It was piled high with a wealth of goose-feather mattresses, so high that there were mounting steps by which to get up on it. From my room the last thing I would hear of Madame before silence settled down was a little "Whoop-la." I asked her about this nightly exclamation.

She grinned and then climbed the stairs by the bed. "This is the way I go to bed. I stand thus. Then I cry 'Whoop-la.'" And with that she gave a jump and landed in the middle of the bed and sank quite out of sight in the soft feather downies.

So we lived together, little Grandmother and I. We would sit quietly in the evenings, watching the economical blaze. I tried to buy extra bundles of faggots; but that would have been waste, and Madame could never tolerate waste. There was a clock that struck the quarter-hours. We would be silent. I had thoughts of my own, thoughts of home. I suspect Madame was so old she did not think much but dozed like a cat. When the clock struck, it would start her mental processes to ticking again. Then she would make some remark such as "The rain outside is *triste*," or "Tomorrow we must go into the field for more cabbage for the cow." After that she would lapse into silence.

I would purloin sugar from the company's supplies and buy chocolate. These were great delicacies for Madame. So we would have, with a gift from the cow, a warming drink before we went to bed. Each evening Madame would heat before the fire a dishpan of water. With this she would disappear into the stable. Our quarters were intimate, and I did not inquire into these apparent ablutions. But finally it came over me that no peasant washed that often. So I said, "Madame, what do you do with that hot water?"

Her replies were always wreathed in smiles: I should like to have known her when she was a young girl. She said: "You like a hot drink. I like a hot drink. Madame the Cow likes a hot drink, too."

We were a happy family, we three.

In the daytime I tramped furiously all the highways and byways. Out on the flat countryside, in addition to the farms reeking with cow dung, there were some beautiful country homes. Now that the excitement of war activity was removed I was horribly lonely, and I was wistful. I used to stand and stare at those graceful homes,

sometimes at night when the windows were lit, and think of the warmth and cleanliness and luxury of life within. Perhaps they were having music inside, or there were guests and gay repartee. I was living the life of a peasant: I was for a time a mere clod, and dreamed of something better. Then I would remember my cheerful hostess, and would swing a mattock to my shoulder and go to work with her in her field. Zola was the one to do justice to this scene. I began to love the sodden earth of the cabbage patch. The little widow would gather the cabbages in a sort of net and bring the great load home on her back to her cow. She was always ashamed that I should carry the burden. But many a time the village saw six-foot Monsieur Bébé, with his height made greater by the net of cabbages on his shoulders, walking alongside the five-foot widow, her conversation going on in ceaseless patter.

There was always one moment of gaiety in the day. A two-wheeled cart—the wheels six feet high—would clatter up to the door, and down would jump a huge man. He would burst open the door and shout, “*Grand’mère!*” Then the two would dance about, holding hands, both laughing. It was the baker, and I liked him. He knew a little English and wrote me later, after I got home, always signing himself, “The Maker of Loaves.”

On occasion I would give a dinner to some of the sergeants. I must do all the shopping. There was little regularly in our larder. Indeed, Madame’s strength was hardly up to the task of preparing the meal, nor did she have china, cooking pots or service to suffice. So I was sent away mysteriously for the day. We men would then meet at a café, and come to the cottage at the appointed hour. As we approached, there would be the faces of a half-dozen women at the widow’s window. Of course, one had cooked the potatoes over her own fire; another

had made the tarts, and a third had provided dishes. But when we entered, behold, only *Grand'mère* was there with a clean kerchief on her head, bowing to *les messieurs*, her guests.

I fell sick with the influenza. The little cottage was hardly the place for recovery. I thought of asking to be taken to a hospital, but Madame would not hear of it. And, besides, there was the danger of being away from the company when orders came to move. My bedroom had a cheap little iron bedstead, a chair, and my army trunk, nothing else. The room, of course, was not heated. What consternation this caused Madame! She hovered over me. I would awake from a fever to find her making useless but kindly ministrations. I got well on cabbage soup. Convalescing, I would sit before the fire wrapped in a quilt. The neighbor women would be brought in to admire my recovery. How well I looked now! they would tell me. I knew that they had been prompted to say encouraging things to me. I was a friend of the Widow Gilbert before I fell ill. But after she had nursed me back to health I was her second son.

At last there came a day when, almost kneeling, I kissed the little grandmother good-bye. My simple life in Trois Moulins had a happy sequel. The next Christmas, Mother sent Madame Gilbert a pair of warm, soft blankets, and we got a letter of thanks written in English by the Maker of Loaves. Then, not so many years later, I again appeared in the cottage doorway. Madame's dimming eyes did not at first recognize me, but an instant later she had leapt from her chair and into my arms.

"My son is dead. My daughter is dead. But my second son has, in truth, returned." Arm and arm we walked about the village so that all could see that I had "in truth" returned.



But the *plus beau jour* was yet to arrive. Margaret and the children (there was now Anne in addition to Roderick) were summering on a fishermen's island off the Brittany coast. From Paris I sent back word that Madame Gilbert still lived and my three must pay her a visit. Margaret wrote to her in her best French and appointed a day. I know just how the little woman worked getting ready. Never before was the floor so swept. Never before did the pots on the wall shine so beautifully. And all the time she would be telling Madame the Cow that the family of Monsieur Bébé was coming. She always spoke Breton to the cow, for it understood no French. Margaret in passing through Nantes bought a fine, warm shawl and a pair of *pantoufles*, and each child was provided with a conventional, tight bouquet, such as French children might take to their grandmother. So they taxied out on the highway over which I had trooped. So they took the turn that led to Trois Moulins. So they arrived at the cottage.

There was Madame standing in her doorway. How much more poignant is joy than sorrow! Madame kissed them all with a toothless smack. A trip was made to the commissary, where Margaret laid in provisions against the winter. And then came Madame's own treat. She had milk and had bought some chocolate. There were but two bowls in the house. So first the children, sitting on stools by the hob, drank their hot chocolate. After the bowls were rinsed with trembling hands the grown-ups drank theirs. There must also be presents from *Grand'mère*. Each child was permitted to choose a gift from the shelf of precious souvenirs of bygone days. On the shelf were some tiny religious images, a seashell box, a crucifix and some colored cards. Rod chose an image of St. Joseph, and Anne one of her namesake saint. Both little china figures had long since lost their color through many washings.

Then came another great moment. Madame's old arms lifted with difficulty the heavy top of the walnut heirloom chest. She removed a white cloth. Under the cloth were three perfect, white eggs—one for each.

Such a gift was almost too much. Margaret thought fast. "But, madame," she said, "what a shame if they should break en route to Paris. Such waste! Should we risk it? Is it right?" So the eggs became an omelet and there was no waste.

Just before the three took their leave, Madame picked every blossom in her garden—the zinnias, the lilies, the petunias and all. As Margaret drove away she peered out of the taxi window over a veritable barricade of flowers, and saw dimly the tiny woman jumping up and down in the doorway, blowing kisses with both hands.



It seemed strange to come home to a year-old child.



### XIII

#### WE START MARRIED LIFE WITH A BABY

MY father-in-law during the war supported not only my little family but his son's as well. Every cent that I managed to send home was saved against the day when I should return. The son, Jack, got to France and, indeed, we had one day there together. Margaret and the now well-rounded Rod lived at home. It was not fair to ask older people to share the agony of birth and the nervous days of the first bringing-up of the generation once removed; but this period brought our son and the two grandparents close together. Dr. Rhodes was particularly soft toward the boy. He could not stand his crying, and if Rod did not go to sleep immediately the doctor would tip-toe out of the living room only to be discovered later soothing the baby but keeping him completely awake.

Margaret was a jealous guardian of the discipline of this her first-born. The child for her had two aspects: this indescribable importance of being the first and, secondly, the fact that he would carry on for the father in case he did not return. When Armistice Day came they knew that the father was safe; and so the baby was propped up against some pillows under his father's soldier portrait, and a flag was put into his hand. Then a photograph was made. Now Rod and Roderick were to know each other.

One day Margaret was alone with the child in the apart-

ment. She began hastily packing suitcases to go to meet me. What clothes should she put in for the baby? She must hurry, hurry. Her mother arrived.

"Heavens! Peggy, where are you going?"

"To meet Rod."

"When did you get word that he had returned?"

Margaret was stunned. She had had no word. Yet within two hours a telegram arrived from me saying that I had unexpectedly come home, that I was at Newport News and would like pie for my first real meal. Either you believe in telepathy or you don't. Take the story or leave it. That night I rang up Chicago on long distance. Our conversation ran something like this:

"Hello. Hello."

"Hello, there."

"This is Rod."

"Oh, I know! When will you be home?"

"I can't hear you."

"What did you say?"

"Hello."

And then, opening the booth door: "Hey, you gang out there, pipe down, will you?" But we never did get a single message to each other, all of which disproves telepathy. I was at the time in a Y.M.C.A. hut with a lot of crazy galoots.

But soon Margaret knew a certain morning train was to bring me to Chicago. Oddly enough, it was the baby's first birthday. The child was washed and washed, befrilled and generally woman-handled. Margaret with hundreds of others waited at the station for the troop train. She asked to go down to the platform, but the guard had orders against it. It was obvious that here was a war bride and her baby. The waiting hundreds took up the issue. There was a near riot on her behalf. The guard not un-

willingly gave in, and Margaret went out on the platform. The attendants there guessed the situation and put her up on a baggage truck. Then thousands of khaki-clad soldiers, their helmets dangling from their shoulder straps, filed out of the train and poured down the platform like a brown river. Panic seized her. Would she be able to pick me out from the monotonous uniforms? Would I recognize her? And then, would I like the baby? Women are like that. She held the baby above her head as a signal.

I found her, of course, and the soldiers gathered about us in a deep circle. That I should be kissing a girl did not interest them—what they wanted to see was a baby. Then the colored porter leaned over my shoulder and said, “Ah’d like to see the baby, too.” I wanted to look at Margaret, to devour her with my eyes, but she kept holding this overdressed child before me. “Sure it’s nice—it’s grand—it’s beautiful. But, gee, it’s wonderful to see *you* again!”

Even after we got home I was supposed to sit and watch the baby as it goo-gooed about on the floor. Now there was really no baby as yet in my life. I knew about sweethearts, but babies were beyond my ken. I psychologically was not yet a father. This was hard for Margaret to understand. She had waited a long time to show me that son of ours, and now I would hardly glance at him.

My real initiation into the parent’s state came a few nights later. Jack was returning from France and had a few hours at the railway station before going on to his wife. Not only were Dr. and Mother Rhodes and Margaret excitedly rushing down to meet him, but Nora, long-time maid and treasured member of the household, was going also. I was to be left with the baby. “If the baby has colic, give him some peppermint.” This was like the cook-books that say “Season to taste” or “Cook just sufficiently.”

The baby started to have colic before the taxi door had slammed.

I went to his door a dozen times before I had the courage to enter. I gave him enough peppermint to supply a candy factory. Then with great difficulty I got him into my arms and sat in a darkened living room. Thoroughly doped, the exciting bundle quieted down. For two whole hours I sat motionless, frightened beyond words at this inexplicable organic mechanism that I held. When the people returned I shushed them severely and grinned at my accomplishment. I had now psychologically achieved fatherhood.

My parents were living in New York at this time. Margaret and I went on to celebrate my return. I suppose it was our honeymoon. I was so used to sleeping on hard and uncomfortable beds that I could not stand the soft beds my people provided. I would usually end the night by rolling in a blanket on the floor. The deuce of a way to spend a honeymoon! New York was too much for me. There were visits, continual talk-talk, dinners and theaters. Finally in the midst of one performance I got up and went out into the lobby. Margaret and my people followed me, much concerned. Did I feel ill? No, I wasn't ill, but I had taken in all that I could stand. I wanted to go back to Chicago. Margaret never forgave me because she did not learn what happened to the heroine of the play. Women, it seems, have to know what happens to heroines.

I was discharged in March. I had enlisted on the 26th of a month, I was discharged on the 26th. Our first two children were each born on the 26th, and the third came into the world prematurely on the 25th.

That spring following my discharge I became an assistant at the University of Chicago under my old friend and critic Salisbury. Then came my first real job: filling in for a



well-known geologist who was on sabbatical leave from Williams College, with the title of assistant professor.

We went to Williamstown, Massachusetts, via Pittsfield. M. Jean MacLane Johansen, who lived in Pittsfield and was the wife of John Johansen who had done my portrait, had offered to paint the baby for us. Margaret was anxious to have the baby look his best. "The first impression will make so much difference," she said. "He must wear his most becoming bonnet."

Being a geographer, I set my watch as we crossed the time line, either backward when it should have gone forward, or forward when it should have gone backward, I don't know which to this day. Feeling that we had two hours to spare I was idly staring out of the window at the station sign. "Pittsfield," it read, to my consternation.

We had a drawing room, and the place was festooned with wet diapers and strewn with nightclothes, toilet articles and what not. The baby was sitting on his pottie. The porter was banging at the door. We had an extra blanket with us, a thing I had carried through the war. Into the blanket we piled everything, the diapers and the baby and the pottie. With such a sack on my back we got off like a couple of gypsies.

Pittsfield is the east-west station for Stockbridge, Lenox and a half-dozen more or less ritzy points in the Berkshires. Everybody was there to meet the train, accompanied by an immaculate chauffeur. I laid the blanket on the railway platform and, kneeling, we dressed the child and folded the diapers while the fashionable crowd picked its way around us. The Johansens came up all smiles, but before the baby had his bonnet on. The portrait was a beauty anyhow.

Our life in Williamstown was really the beginning of our married state. I carried my "bride" once again across a threshold, this time with a baby in her arms but with bene-

fit of clergy. The house in which we started our many years of happiness was the grandest we ever occupied. It had two large living rooms furnished with delicate Empire furniture and there were fireplaces everywhere. Upstairs there were six bedrooms and many baths. Margaret converted one into a dark room. She was still following her portrait photography and incidentally helping to fill our slim pocketbook. But, above all, the windows of the house had grand views of the Taconic Mountains, which I had known and loved since Hoosac days.

We were young, and of course I felt the oppressive dignity of my newly acquired professorship. Yet somehow Margaret could not be whipped around into the proper austere behavior for a professor's wife. She bought herself a bicycle, as we were some distance from the shops—one without a coaster brake. There is a steep descent in Williamstown as you come into the trade street. Down this hill she came on her bicycle just at the hour when the street was most crowded with students. The bicycle speeded out of control so that she was forced to take her feet from the pedals and stick them straight before her. She tore through the crowd by a miracle of steering, her dress billowing out in the wind. The students responded with a cheer for the new professor's wife. On another day Mrs. Garfield, the president's wife, came to make her first formal call at the hour of four in the afternoon. She got no response at the door but began looking around, as the baby was to be seen toddling about the yard.

"Oh, here I am!" cried Margaret. She was up an apple tree. Margaret was always a problem child.

As a boy I had spent a summer at Williamstown. Moreover, Hoosac was but a short distance away. Therefore we had friends from the start. Faculties are out-going, socially, and make things easy for young people, and the Williams

staff was no exception. Every one was grand to us. Margaret was even accepted into inner circles:

"My dear, we do hope you will come. It is just a select little group of rare souls who commune with each other. We read poetry by candlelight."

In the cold winter we would go sleigh-riding to warm farmhouses where dinner was prepared for us. On one of these community parties I discovered an obsession in my wife which was most serious, and which I have had to fight all my life. (Now that I look back on some of our jaunts in New York among the brass shops of Allen Street, I should have guessed the whole thing earlier.) During the farm dinner Margaret disappeared. Finally I got worried and after an extensive search found her in the loft of the barn. Then truth dawned on me—I had married an antique hound. We came home from the ride with the bedstead inside the sleigh and the guests on the top of the bedstead.

It came to be that one room in our house was used for storing antiques, some of which I am still mending. Once Margaret found a beautiful bed occupied by a sick woman. She swears that it isn't true, but I know for a fact that the old lady died in a new iron bed, and that the antique now occupies our guest room. There is nothing that one can do about such a passion in a mate except grin and bear it.

There is no more beautiful college town than Williamstown. Its broad Main Street is one of the loveliest. The hills in autumn are superb, and such beauty has inspired not only the college song but a grand and characteristic custom. Some particularly fine day when the autumn colors are at their height the clarion rings out the news that it is Mountain Day. Classes are dismissed, and all the world goes vagabonding to the highest peaks. There is, indeed, so much out-of-door life that Williams College has been called

a country club. If so, it is a grand one. We professors are always teaching vaguely about what we call the quality of life. In the Housatonic Valley there is no need for such teaching: Nature points the way. I cannot see that a college should be criticized for a natural endowment. Perhaps the art of Nature which is inherently a part of Williams' life is more important than academic abstractions. Other people scorn Williams because it is a little place lost in the hills. It is, of course, provincial compared to Columbia; but it has a delightful provincialism, and I like provincialisms. As a geographer I study them, and as a human geographer I revel in them.

The intangible something of a Williams career becomes very real when you meet a group of graduates. This wealth of being which they had in college days binds Williams men together, a common experience in fine living. I was once introduced in a small Ohio town to the president of the bank as coming from Williams. It turned out that most of his staff were Williams men. They left their desks to flock about me and planned such good-fellowship that, if I had accepted it, I might still be living in Lancaster.

And so the year at Williams was to us a year of wealth in experience though we did not have much money. We used to buy corn meal by mail from Sears, Roebuck because it was a bit cheaper than at the A. & P. Fortunately the baby loved prunes and rice. They were cheap. But the year stands out for me for two things. It was my first experience as a lecturer, and it was a winter of unusual weather. Great storms piled the snow so high that as we left the porch on skis we went, not down, but up hill. Even two-year-old Rod skied. We fastened him in the ski binders and started him evenly down a little slope. He always arrived at the bottom safely because he was too

little to divert the skis and too tightly bound in to fall down.

No hill seemed too foolhardy for us, though in spite of my Hoosac days I was a novice and it was Margaret's first experience. Margaret was so small that when she tumbled into a snowdrift she would disappear entirely from sight, the only sign being a ski up at some odd angle. That Christmas I bundled Rod up, tied him to a sled, and went into the mountain. We selected a tree, cut it down, and then the two of us on top of the tree and sled came coasting back into our dooryard.

Of the year one character stands out: our next-door neighbor, Walter McLaren, economist, known to many as executive secretary of the Institute of Politics that President Garfield used to hold in the summer. McLaren was an interesting man with a long Japanese background; his children had Japanese pet names, and there was a Japanese nurse. McLaren supplied us with all the gossip. "The Harts had three empty cream bottles out this morning. They didn't tell me anything about it, but they must have had a party. I'll find out for you who was there." Besides supplying gossip he was most kind to us and took a fatherly interest in us. I worked all evening on my studies, and he used to entertain Margaret, which was, as I look on it, no distinct self-sacrifice. He always referred to us as the "crazy Peatties" and could never get over our informality.

I let him down terribly once, couldn't help it—and to this day he has not forgiven me. There was an attempt on the part of Garfield to modernize the classical curriculum. The college vote, as canvassed by McLaren, was just evenly divided. So he came to me. I had the deciding vote. I was happy to throw my vote toward modernization. The faculty meetings at Williams are nicely housed and most dignified. I was taking the place of a fine old man named

Cleland. Though officially not of the faculty that year, Cleland appeared and asked permission to speak. It was granted, and he spoke against the change. It was really his chair that I held; I was leaving at the end of the year and had no right to determine the course of local history. Therefore, I rose and gave my proxy to Cleland. Garfield smiled when he saw he had lost, but McLaren scowled across the room. He thought I should have stood by the modernist group.

I was put to a test by my first year of teaching. I had four classes ranging from general geology to laboratory mineralogy. Fortunately Williams was most perfectly equipped in matters geologic. In addition to that I completed my doctor's dissertation and passed my last examination; I did the thesis in the wee hours of the night. And then there was the almost continuous stoking of the furnace. While Margaret was in Albany for an operation we hired a maid who turned out to be a dope fiend. She would come rather irregularly in the morning and leave after supper. I fed the baby three meals a day. In the evenings the baby and I were alone while the blizzard howled out-of-doors, howled in the house. I worried greatly about keeping the child warm at night. I had some sort of idea that he might freeze. My camping experience came to the rescue. I bought some heavy canvas and cut and sewed it myself, to form a sleeping bag with a hood. Once buttoned in, no papoose was ever more snug. It wasn't exactly a feminine device, but it worked.

The snow lasted late that year, and then one day Nature lifted her skirts and began to dance. I don't believe that there is anything more beautiful than a New England spring. Before the apple blossoms were gone the grass in the meadows was knee-deep and fragrant. The severity of the winter made the release and blooming the more won-

derful by contrast. I was back to the life I loved, but this time hand in hand with the companion of my dreams. I got out my beloved *Songs of Vagabondia*. The last verse of "Spring Song" runs:

Only make me over, April,  
When the sap begins to stir!  
Make me man or make me woman,  
Make me oaf or ape or human,  
Cup of flower or cone of fir;  
Make me anything but neuter  
When the sap begins to stir!

We picnicked on hillsides; there were trilliums in the woods and arbutus on the hills. We followed stream courses through the meadows. That our last pay check was imminent did not bother us. That there was no job ahead gave us little concern. God would take care of us just as he had brought back the spring. And he did. God appeared in the guise of the Cosden Oil & Gas Company, Incorporated, of Tulsa, Oklahoma. I went to the Southwest for the summer as an oil geologist, and Margaret went back to her tree house on the island.

## XIV

### THE HOUSE ON PERRY STREET

**I**N August of my first Oklahoma summer I received an offer of a position at Ohio State University which suited me excellently. I was to teach both geology and geography. I knew little of Columbus except for three days I had spent there at the barracks during the war. I had an idea that the university was at Athens where Ohio University is, but I did know of a museum of neolithic stuff in Columbus that is unique.

Margaret went ahead to arrange living quarters. There was a house shortage after the war, and she took what she could get. Twenty years ago the town was of the most depressing architecture. It seemed as if none of its builders had a design for living. Today one still approaches the university along discouraging streets, and North High would win any prize for ugliness. Though pleasant suburbs have sprung up around the town, still the saving grace of Columbus is its kindly people.

The first year, Margaret was confined and Anne was born. With two babies she was kept busy. For three years we lived in unalluring situations. Our second "home" was a half-double with the street number of 1492. That seemed at least prophetic for further exploration. Margaret's passion for antiques had proved to be congenital, and she and her mother had amassed some fine pieces. These stood



conspicuously out of place in the dingy half-double. However, kind people made everything as pleasant as possible for us.

At one of our attempts to repay courtesies there were deans' wives and ladies of great dignity crowded in our tiny front room. Rod, very clean and dressed to meet the ladies, sat on the top stair. In order to descend, his mother pushed him aside with the toe of her shoe and then went to greet her guests in her best imitation of Lady Clara Vere de Vere. But Rod's *amour propre* had been seriously injured. He walked deliberately into the center of the group and announced lustily:

"My mother kicked me in the pants."

"Why, darling, I did no such thing."

"Yes, you did. You kicked me right here." And to prove the point he bent over and indicated with one small finger what in Ohio is legally known as the fleshy part of the back.

Margaret turned to her guests with what she hoped was a smile and, amidst a sudden burst of talk, the party went on.

We had many parties that year, perhaps because we were struggling so hard to overcome our immediate environment. We disliked our house intensely. Margaret attacks problems with masculine directness. Where I lack courage she has it, and at seventy-five she will have daring enough for twice her size.

Along with her unwillingness to be defeated, Margaret has a passion for art, art of living and art of decoration. In those first years I was greatly absorbed in learning to teach and did not notice that she was pining away; but Margaret will pine just so long and then she goes into action. The ugliness of 1492 was simply too much for her. She stopped to ask a contractor how much a house he was

building would cost, and within three weeks we had begun to dig the foundation pit for a new home, with the street number of 1601. Margaret had enough money from an inheritance from a Crocker of California to buy the lot, and we built the house on credit and nerve—mostly nerve. All of which says volumes about the woman I married. It was she who drew the plans while I wrote up the specifications. It was she who put enough character into me to sign legal papers and get things under way. It was she who put enough character into the house to make it charming.

From the first I worked on every stage of construction. I would hurry from classes to take part in digging the foundation. I worked alongside the carpenters. Terrible rains held us up. Twice the water in the open foundation pit attracted lightning and the cement blocks that held back the dirt were hurled down. When the chimney was erected I nailed a horseshoe there and turned it up the right way, and the lightning has never struck us since. Q.E.D.

Number 1492 was a mile from the university and three miles from 1601. Margaret has an innate skill as a craftsman. Disgusted at the ordinary tiles available, she began working in the ceramics department of the university to make her own. After arranging the house she would put the two babies into two coats and start off with one child in a baby carriage and one walking. Our lively puppy would be tied to the handle of the cart. So she would go to the ceramics department for the day. There she would knead the tough clay, form it and cut it, glaze it and fire it. The children were everywhere. Tired of making mud pies, they would wander. Anne wandered into a classroom during a lecture. I was irate and protested that it was not dignified, but Margaret seemed untroubled. Another time the whole ceramics staff was called upon to search for Anne,

who had disappeared. At last the dog found her in an empty kiln where she was sound asleep.

As the house went up Margaret was everywhere, directing and overseeing. She has a distinct sense of construction. I was standing on a scaffold with a carpenter. Margaret came around the house and gave some direction. The carpenter spoke to me.

"Is that your wife?" he asked with his mouth full of nails.

"Yes," I said.

"I married one of them little ones, too. They sure know their minds."

By September we were ready for painting. This Margaret and I and a student did ourselves, inside and out. To save money I finished the floors and, almost, my back. We would start out to work in the morning, a caravan of father and mother, one child on a scooter and one in a gocart, and a dog. We spent the day at the house, cooking our meals over an open fire in the mud yard. Then Margaret began staying home to make curtains and on the 26th of October we moved in.

At last my Margaret had, by reason of her own courage and the force of her own drive, the background that she deserved. There was a living room with an open fire and with a dining space on an ell. Bookcases up to the ceiling framed a large window that looked out on university meadows and the river. Of all the rooms the kitchen was the most distinctive. Margaret decorated every inch of the woodwork with gay designs and inscriptions. On the cupboard over the sink ran the words, "God Bless Our Cook." I penciled in underneath "except when breakfast is late," but it was erased. The pantry door had a Chinese red background on which was a Tree of Life and Adam and Eve and the Apple, the first food transaction.

We had a miserable old icebox. Margaret spruced it up with a coat of red and inscribed it:

Iceman, pause and contemplate  
This paradoxical estate.  
In outward signs be no believer  
For I am but a gay deceiver.  
'Neath my exotic crimson chest  
A lump of ice lies in my breast.  
So, Iceman, and good folk, behold,  
How ardent mien concealeth cold.

The iceman read it, grinned, but said only, "Hell!"

This 1601 was on Perry Street, and though we may grow old in the house it will always stand for those days so precious to every one, the days of early married life and the time when the children were young. And Perry Street was more than a location, it was a community. There were other young couples and hordes of children that formed the social conglomerate. The neighborhood became so much an organism that people used to ask not What do you Peatties, or the Cokers, or the Walradts think of it? but What does Perry Street think of it? So integrated were we, that our children might be washed for dinner by other parents while we found ourselves disciplining little Martha Coker and digging in her ears.

*Sans doute*, you realize by this time that Margaret and I are sentimentalists. Now we had our own hearthstone. We didn't go so far as to have *The Hanging of the Crane* on our walls, but we were glad to have two little stools for Rod and for Anne to sit by the fire. Anne was still a baby. A new baby always makes friends for its parents, and Perry Street in those days was having babies. The street had been dubbed Pregnancy Row. Rod was a round boy, bonny and interested in things manual. He had looked like me for one horrible year but then had come to have

his own individuality. There were a good many gang fights in the neighborhood, and when I came home to find two boys sitting on one prostrate form in the alley pummeling another boy I felt that something should be done.

So I started the King Arthur Club. I was king and Margaret was Guinevere, and all the boys and a few tom-boys were knights. We read the tales, and each selected a hero's name for himself. The boys made extraordinary armor out of flattened tin cans. They had swords and shields and rules of chivalry and fair play. But also there were mighty battles, enough to satisfy any fighting lust in the youngsters. The induction of a new knight was a serious matter. I sat on the raised window seat in a bathrobe and a crown and beside me was my beautiful Queen Guinevere in a Japanese kimono. Before us on the floor were two lighted candles. The neophyte would kneel and take oath to be true to king, country and womanhood. If I ever discovered them being untrue to king and my rules I came down on them hard. At a party Rod stole an extra slice of cake. The knights waited on me the next day in the armory (basement) and demanded that he be "deknighted."

Anne was something special and difficult to describe. Even when a tiny baby she sat up decidedly on her own spine and asked help from no one. She was blonde and wore little smocked affairs that her mother made, diminutive pieces of cloth which billowed out like a tea cosy. She had blue eyes and wore her hair à la Alice in Wonderland. But she was no delicate sissy. To call her for dinner one must look in the top of some good climbing tree. Her tiny features and little pointed chin spelled determination. As a bit of a child she used to get my big hat and cane and plan to go to far distant lands.

By the age of six this wanderlust had us frightened. We had not minded when Rod built himself an elaborate boy-

sized airplane and got his gang to push him off the hill, only to crash below. But when Anne made up her very definite little mind to leave home we found ourselves concerned. It all happened because, studying pioneer life at school, the boys made a covered wagon. The girls were excluded from so masculine a task. So Anne would make her own prairie schooner. I helped her saw wooden wheels. She built the cart body, and over wires spread a red canvas top. Then fastening the dog in front, she drove to school in as neat a prairie schooner as one could wish to see. But this triumph was not enough. She began planning a secret journey. In a careful little hand she wrote out every detail in a small notebook which she bound in bright-blue paper. Her notes were liberally illustrated on the margins. The lists of what she deemed qualities necessary for an adventure were carefully arranged. Under the heading "Ways I Must Be" she had included,

Clean  
Pluky  
Not too much talking  
Ready in time

The heading "What I Must Take" included,

Soap  
Mony  
A blanket for cold  
Toothpaste

And "Ways I Must Not Be" were,

Cry baby  
Sneeky  
Liar  
Late

There was a wonderful map, I remember, of an imaginary country with rivers and lakes and the road she must follow. But what worried us was the first sentence in her little book.

It began with almost dangerous precision: "At 5:21 in the morning I will choose I will get up while they are asleep. I will start on my journey." I used to visit her room early every morning to be sure that she had not left us. We got to planning events a week ahead for her so as to be certain she would not embark upon the unknown. It was not until years later that the "pluky" girl with "mony" of her own went off on adventures.

Margaret's desire for some artistic expression was insatiable and usually kept her bedroom and oftentimes my study in a mess. She was a member of the Half Souls (a paraphrase on Margot Asquith's Society of Souls). Most of the ladies on Perry Street were Half Souls and most of the Half Souls were ladies of Perry Street. It was a weekly group for craftsmanship in the arts—all of the arts. They painted trays, did wood blocks, stamped batik and could be counted upon to make the house a complete wreck. How many times I came home to find my study a chaos of clippings, paints, and teacups! Another organization was the Perry Street Improvement Association. It was merely an agreement that when a woman got a new party gown she was to dash from house to house to have the jury decide whether or not the neck was right.

Occasionally we would entertain visiting ambassadors from other sections of the city. The coming of these foreigners called for a formal dinner and much borrowing of extra service and all that. We were not equipped with well-trained help, and the soup was often cold; and the maid would invariably serve from the wrong side. Every young housewife will know what I mean. So Margaret and two young matrons made an agreement. They would give three formal dinners. Each in turn was to be a hostess, and the other two disguised as cocoa mulattoes would prepare the meal and serve. The hostess was merely to order the meal

and then retire to make herself beautiful. The remaining two did all the work.

At such a dinner at our house there was a law professor who had been an old flame of one of the women. The well-bred guests did not take notice of the servants who announced dinner and served so quietly; but when I spoke to one of the women for serving on my wrong side the man in question looked up. After she had left he said, "Pardon my saying so, but have you noticed how much your colored maid looks like Mrs. Coker?" There was one southern lady present. At dessert one "mulatto" came in and asked if she might sit beside her to eat her dessert as it was lonely in the kitchen. The southerner gasped, but was a lady to the end. "Certainly," she said, "I would be glad to have you do so." By that time the deception was found out and the guests were sworn to secrecy so that another dinner might be planned.

Another form of expression which this little bundle of life that I wed undertook was writing. Her first production on Perry Street was a description of the making of the house under the title of *The Professor Builds a House*. Her love of children caused her to make a number of contributions to children's magazines.

All this was an expression of a sort of daring, of willingness to meet life and not be afraid. Margaret has always been thus. In her childhood on the island there was a tremendous barn. Her mother tells of standing almost breathless, not daring to make a distracting cry, while a pigtailed girl cheerfully danced along the ridgepole. I am by nature cautious, but not so Peggy. I still hold my breath when she tells how she and Archibald MacLeish had a long tunnel under the hay to a secret chamber where they used to smoke corn-silk cigarettes. Merciful heavens! A Columbus friend remembers that many years ago she



was on a steamer that stopped at Margaret's island. The men were unable to get a fractious horse across the gang-plank and onto the boat. Then a little girl got on the horse and rode it in. It was that girl again. I have never seen Margaret hesitate to ride any horse. Animals are her passion. We have always had pets until a family allergy developed. There has been a succession of dogs, most of them sick and needing nursing. There have been white rats, turtles, one baby skunk, a few snakes, some lizards, birds with broken wings, and goldfish. In Paris we had two white mice that gradually became grey mice after they took to living in the coal bin. Margaret was to fly across the Mediterranean from Carthage to Antibes, and she took with her a porcupine she had bought in the market when she found that it was to be boiled alive as a delicacy. The porcupine could not stand the high altitude and died; otherwise I am sure that I should have had to pay duty on it per quill. No, living with Margaret has never been living alone with Margaret.

Any bedroom that has been vacated by a child going away to school or college has always been filled by some student who needed work and turned out to need Margaret's sympathy. There was one we called Mooey, who strove with all his energy to be a dentist, and Ellsworth, the country boy of the Abraham Lincoln type, whom Margaret encouraged to go back to his home town to be the big man there. There was the overgrown Vermont boy, a huge fellow, who used to scare our guests. When the door-bell rang he would put on a white coat, throw open the door as if for a queen and, bowing to the waist, say in a deep voice, "How do you do? Come in." They were afraid not to obey. There were nephews and sons of friends who needed encouragement and advice. And there were two young Chinese gentlemen impoverished by the

war. They loved Margaret, and she taught them the virtue and happiness of work. In China scholars merely go for a walk, they never labor. One saw me working in the garden and asked if my ancestors were farmers. This habit of consoling students that bursts from Margaret's being as soon as a bedroom is empty always seemed somehow closely allied to her search for birds with broken wings so that she might mend them. I accuse her of pinching babies so that she can give them comfort.

I believe that our house has as complete a collection of modern poetry as most libraries. The collection represents one of my wife's chief intellectual and artistic pleasures, and her own poems are an expression of this pleasure. She has a game she always plays. She will buy a book of poems as it is issued, read it, and then if she believes it has sufficient merit put it among the first editions to await public acclaim—which is the real way to collect first editions. Besides keeping up on the current novels of worth she will at times read some philosophic contribution and become tremendously excited. Strachey's approach to communism was a revelation to her. I am afraid she too seldom sprinkles them with salt before reading.

I don't know that Margaret or I could measure the importance of these early years. They must have been important, for they were the time of root growth. It was on this period as a foundation that we built the future. Then my never predictable wife sprung a new one on me. We were to go abroad for a year and a half. I had earned some vacation credit by teaching in the summer. We would take some time on our own. I was to study in European fields. We had an old four-cylinder Dodge which we tried to sell, but no one would look at it. So we drove it to the railway station, left it there, and started out for parts unknown.

## XV

### I GO TO THE MOUNTAIN

THE academic reason for our trip abroad was that every professor is called upon for some major intellectual production. It is the matured evidence of his continued interest in research. Under Ward in the Harvard days I had begun a library study of mountain climatology, partly to force myself to master the agglutinative German language. Moreover, I had a fine love of mountains themselves. This love began with my boyhood rambles in the North Carolina Blue Ridge, where for a time I literally lived on a mountaintop. Do you know those peaks? From them I could look to indescribable views of hazy-blue distance such as no alp of later experience ever afforded. Then I had climbed in the volcanically colored San Juan Mountains of Colorado and a summer's teaching at Berkeley gave me experience in the high Sierra Nevada. Camping there one night with Rod, I woke to feel the little boy climbing into my narrow sleeping bag. He was afraid that the deer might trample him. And I still think that Yosemite Park is one of the great shows on earth. But I also chose mountain geography as a subject of research because it was dramatic. If life is not dramatic it is, for me, not life. Lastly, Margaret and I chose distant mountains for the same reason that we taught our children to climb high trees.

We sailed from New York one stormy March on an Italian ship named the *Columbus*. It was a tiny thing but cheap, and I swear it was modeled after one of the original caravels. Margaret unearthed from our costume trunk a pair of long, black tights of her mother's, of the kind that Florence Nightingale wore in the Crimean War. As we left the harbor nothing would do but that Margaret should stand on the bow of the boat. The other passengers lined up on a safer deck and looked on. Suddenly a wind, in this case, a spanking breeze, lifted Margaret's skirts over her head and held them there while the black tights were silhouetted against the white rail. I had to slide down two flights of stairs to save her dignity. The rest of the trip was absolutely uneventful except for the two children's measles.

We landed at Palermo and motored to Taormina. The interior plateau with its mountaintop villages satisfied my soul. Taormina is, of course, one of the most beautiful towns in the world. We remained a month to rest and soak up the Easter sun. There I had my first experience with environmental determinism. I used to smile at the lassitude of the Italians, whose chief competitive spirit was shown in an effort to get up early enough to get a seat on the marble benches in the cathedral square. But the subtropical climate came to have its way with me. Before the month was up I was myself competing for a place in the sun.

And there were lazy days at the tideless strand line on the beach at Isola Bella. (Aren't Italian place names the most beautiful?) But we were at times energetic. We would climb Monte Ziretto for lunch at a high inn overlooking the Mediterranean blue. That is, I would climb and Margaret would ride a complaining donkey. The donkey boy kept up a continual switching and would cry to his beast, "*Avanti, Margarita. Mangiare maccheroni!*" I

made the tedious ascent of Mount Etna, my first volcano, and slept near the active summit in a dirty *rifugio*. Either the local sausage or the altitude gave me an attack of mountain sickness and the right to notes on *mal de montagne* for my thesis.

Margaret became absorbed in Sicilian puppet shows founded on the Saracen legends. She went so often that she was well known to the puppeteers. The Italians were importunate and always trying to force us to buy things. One day I was called from dinner to find a man at the door with a huge bunch of roses which he offered me. I spoke little Italian, and I believed that here was another case of high-pressure salesmanship. With tears in his eyes the man was not to be denied. Then I understood that here was the puppeteer bringing roses to the *signora* in appreciation for her patronage. The Italians, I believe, know more of the art of living than any other two nations. We never did properly master even the simplest Italian but the first word that the children on the boat put in their vocabulary was *occupato*.

I began my intensive studies after we were established in the eastern Pyrenees of France in a delightful village known as Vernet-les-Bains. The town and the local speech were Catalan. It was Mediterranean country in winter. Everywhere there was the rush and gurgle of water in the irrigation ditches. The sunlight was clear and warm, like the local wine. The town had a spa and some hotels, but we lived in a delightful pension under the castle walls. Its garden was a terraced affair, and in the place of flowers there were stiff rows of cabbage and *salade*. The French, especially in mountain country where level land is at a premium, allow for no waste. All night we could hear the deep notes of the water in the little canals that ran through the garden.

I don't think that Margaret was ever happier, and when Margaret is happy I am. She bought some baby ducks which she pretended were for the children and which swam about in the little canals. They were named François and Marthe, the Gaulish equivalents of names of playmates at home. Mostly Margaret disappeared for the day with paints and canvas, while a dark-haired Catalan girl tended the children. Rod was put into the local public school. It was a tremendously hard experience. The knickered boy was out of place among the black-gowned peasant children, and they put upon him brutally. The teachers were severe to say the least. The French do not always have good manners. How the teacher came down on him when he replied to her question with the familiar "Quoi?" instead of "Pardon, madame?"

We let the children roam everywhere in a most un-French manner. Rod had a cow horn which he was to blow in case he was lost. One time when I was off for the day he was permitted to start out alone to scale a sizable and rocky peak. He was then ten. When I returned Margaret was in a panic, for he had been gone all day and a group of excitable French had surrounded her, pouring out the cheerful news that he must have fallen down the rocks and at this moment be lying at the base of some cliff, or that bears must have devoured him, and lastly that probably Spanish brigands already had him across the border. We were about to organize searching parties before darkness fell when we heard his cheerful horn as he came up the road. He had made the peak and descended on the far side to a village, and with the help of his childish French he had bought bonbons and here he was, *un brave garçon*. The armchair mountaineers at the inn made much of him, but perhaps McLaren had been right—perhaps we were the "crazy Peatties."

Of course, then Anne must climb a peak. So hand and hand we started off for a prominent but not too high one. The peak turned out to be a point of rock. I retired and left Anne sitting on her mountain, chin in hand, contemplating the universe before her and pondering upon the puniness of mankind. Eventually Anne came to know well many of the most hidden trails among the gorse and broom plants that cover the front face of the lower Pyrenees. For Fifine, her Catalan nurse, was a young thing and was in love, as young things will be, with the village goat-herd.

The goats, if not the herder, were among the best features of Vernet. Every morning the herd boy collected them from the little enclosures which form the barnyard of every Catalan home. With a hundred or more he started for high cliffs, where the goats led precipitous but happy lives and where no cow or sheep could follow to compete for forage.

It was nice of Fifine to be willing to take Anne to the mountains every day, and it was a fortunate circumstance that they should start out at just the time when the goat-herd took his leaping drove aloft. Anne came to love one special kid that she fed and petted. So many hours were spent, girl and goat, sitting on some rock high up among the mountain gorse, thinking about what girls and goats think about. One cannot measure what this happy solitude in the face of beauty was worth. If such a value was imponderable, yet some essence of poetry was granted to Anne as she sat before her mountain view of the Conflent, seeing beyond Villefranche and even to the red-tiled roofs of Castille.

We were in the shadow of a grand eminence, Mount Canigou. It stood out from the main chain of the Pyrenees almost as perfectly formed as a volcanic cone. I was

climbing daily; but Rod had planned and planned this ascent, and I waited until he was free to go. It rose nine thousand feet above its plain, and to save a little boy's legs we drove up to the road's end. From there on foot we reached an alpine inn by sundown.

The next morning at dawn we tackled the last thousand feet. Sudden changes in altitude are not easy on the heart, and the arms and legs become as lead and almost unendurable to lift. Also, the stomach may feel uneasy, and there is a distressing ringing in the ears. We were now well above the tree line on a trail that was at times a bit dizzy. Suddenly the boy sat down on a rock, and desolation spread over his face. He said he believed he would stay there while I made the peak. So I sat beside him and began to tell a story of brave knights and lovely ladies. It was a cool exposure, and we moved a bit along the trail and heard more of the story. After a few of these stages, lo and behold, we were at the summit. Once there he felt a fine sense of conquest, and we had before us the beautiful sunlit land and an endless sea dotted with boats.

I went at my study of mountains with no definite plan: I merely brought Mohammed to the mountain with a belief that when men and mountains come together things happen. I proceeded to my research by the chorographic method—"chorography" is the geographer's term for the detailed study of a small place. With a plane table I began mapping, and for three months I placed every natural or cultural feature of the valley on my chart. I was interested in crop distribution, the height limit of cultivation and forests, and where the vines were and why. I compared one rock formation and its productivity with another, and I measured the importance of the sunny as compared with the shady slope. The university had provided me with surveying and meteorological instruments.



The peasants ignored my work, but not so local officialdom. I was working near an international border and I might be a spy. So I was summoned before the mayor and his chief advisers, and I could see the moment was one of severe dignity. I pleaded my own case in French. I told them how the scientific world was interested in their manner of life, and I showed them how I had plotted their cabbage patches. And I ended with the sentence, "And, gracious messieurs, cabbage patches are not of international importance." They understood at last, laughed, and we all went to a café to pledge friendship between two great nations.

As I worked, my problem began to unfold itself. I saw how I must proceed, and yet as I studied I felt that someone had been there before me. Thus I went to the nearest university, Montpellier, to read. Besides publications on my region I discovered two living scientists who knew more about the territory than I ever could know. The numbers of books and articles on mountains, unavailable in most American libraries, overwhelmed me. Then I discovered what my role should be: it was to conduct as many types of field studies as possible so that I should be qualified to read and be critical of these books; then I might build my experiences into a book in such a way as to bring home both a study of mountain geography and the technique of mountain studies. I was delighted. Now I should have to travel to many mountains of which I had longingly read: the Tirol, Graubünden, the Julian Alps, the mountains of Savoy and Provence, and the Valais. I must needs see Mont Blanc and visit the Spanish Sierra Nevada.

While I was at Montpellier, I fell in with adventure. I had an idea that it might be well for us to spend the winter there while I read at the university, and so I looked about for a house. I ordered a taxi to take me to the English-

American section, for I knew there was a colony of medical students in the town. The taxi driver struck directly out of town and through the endless vineyards of the Midi. I became worried until I saw that he was bearing upon a large château that stood on a hill. I decided I would let adventure take its course. At the entrance of the park I dismissed the man and walked toward the great door. As I approached, it opened and an East Indian offered me his hand and said, "Won't you stay to dinner?"

I would, of course, and inquired the name of my host. It turned out that the château belonged to Patrick Geddes, the father of town planning, and that this was his *collège*. Here any American was welcome, and I am afraid my Americanism was only too obvious, even to an East Indian. At dinner we sat on benches at a long refectory table. Geddes, the patriarch and master, sat at one end, and the students ranged on the sides. The room was beautifully furnished and lighted by candles which reflected in the highly polished grand piano. Tapestries hung on the walls.

I have never been in anything like that setting in the United States unless it is Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin in the hills of Wisconsin. Both are more than schools: they are ways of life. Each is dominated by the personality of the master. At Taliesin on a Sunday night the stage seems a bit more set. And there, perhaps, it is Wright's personality and that of his lovely Montenegrin wife that dominate the scene. At the Geddes establishment I felt that the students had a greater part in the spirit of the place than at Taliesin.

After dinner Geddes took me for a walk along the rose path. He said, "Now I will instruct you." He was a tall man with a long, white beard and in every way venerable; but he lacked no vitality: he was quick of speech and quick of movement. His garden looked over miles of vine-

yards, and the winter roses were in bloom. So we tramped the path back and forth, while I had my peripatetic lesson. At the end of the path Geddes would turn suddenly and we would fall into step. Sometimes he turned before we got to the end of the walk, and I, intent on the content of words, would shoot beyond him and be forced to turn and run back so as not to miss anything.

I went home to Vernet-les-Bains with a determination to map details of the valley no longer but to climb mountains for vistas and in order to see the larger aspects of my problem. I spent days up among the alp lands and on the lonely plateaus. I came upon remote herders. I asked one about his solitude. He had none, he said, for there were many friends about. Then he walked to the edge of the gorge, where a mountain stream roared two thousand feet below, and hallooed. A moment's pause, and almost like an echo came back an answer from some remote alp. "You see," he said, "I have friends."

At times I would not return at night but stayed in some distant settlement on the far side of a mountain—some settlement lost at the end of a craggy valley and made noisy by the roar of a snow-fed stream. Eerie sorts of places they were, very unreal. I found towns that scarcely were known to the republic, places where the populace were all of little, old, bent folk, more like leprechauns than humans. Once I crossed the Spanish border at a little-frequented pass. A border guard discovered me and demanded my passport. He read it a very long time, though there are only a few words in such a document. Then we walked together down to the village on the Spanish side and fell into conversation. "You're German, aren't you?" he said. He had not read a single word of the English.

And then we all, the whole family, went to visit the mad priest of Py. Py lies at the road's end, where one begins to

climb the rocky trail that leads to the lost town of Mantet. Py has a few, irregular streets, lined by brown cobble houses with tiled roofs, low doors, and little windows. Here there is a semicircular protuberance from a house that proclaims a bake oven. Built into the house is the cow stable and perhaps a pigsty. In the summer's heat the town reeks with cow dung, and the inn is a catchall for flies. But above the town is a chapel which fifteen years ago was administered by an aged priest. The sophisticated, back in Vernet, said he was mad. He was a tall, gaunt man with luminous skin and deep-set eyes, and a way of making you feel at ease when he smiled. He was, I suppose, either mad or spiritually already of another world. One is never quite sure where spirituality leaves off and madness begins. Perhaps all the prophets were mad.

As we found him he was standing amongst his beehives, with the bees all about him as if they knew him and loved him. He plucked bees carefully from his face and neck and came to meet us, smiling. Every hive was painted a different color he said, to please the bees. Later we went into his chambers. In his bedroom he had saucers of sweet stuff for the bees that came in through the open window. The room was in confusion, and thrown about were some really beautiful old vestments. He gave us delicious wine made of honey. He took us to admire every detail of the venerable chapel. After that we sat on the covered portico of the church—covered because at this altitude there are snows in winter—and talked of his life and work. He told us how he had come to the village as a young man and how, breviary in hand, he had walked among the hayfields and come to know the people.

"We are all old people here today," he went quietly on, "grown old together. The young people will no longer remain, for the mountain life is too hard; and they go to



The "mad" priest of Py gave Margaret a dove to fondle.



The observatory on the Pic du Midi where I made some studies is the highest permanently inhabited house in Europe.



the cities. That is not godly. We are not so many souls in Py as we used to be. But the mountain life is good. It brings one near to God."

He looked to the great circle of peaks that could be seen from the arcade of the portico. An old man passed, bent under a load of rye sheaves.

"There goes Armand," he went on. "See that little, light-colored patch far up the slope of that mountain? That is where he comes from. It is an hour down and two hours up. And in the spring he carries manure in a basket up that same trail. Armand is old now and will die soon and tend his rye no longer. But Armand knows about mountains and he knows about God. My people are good people."

As he talked a cloud of doves circled about the belfry and cooed from the cornice of the church. "And the doves—they are my friends, too. Watch!" With that he stepped to the bell rope and rang the bell twice. Then there was a great fluttering, and the doves came down to the old man and settled all about his shoulders and on the rail of the porch. He talked to them and named them, and then one by one he picked them off and gave them to the children and to us until each of us had an armful of doves.

We went away not thinking of the quality of madness but of spirit. I had found something of mountains which I could never put into my study because of the failure of words or because men would not believe me.

## XVI

### THE FINE ART OF TRAVEL

AS a family we motored along the high, winding Route des Pyrénées to the beautiful *gaves*, that is, valleys, central to the French side of the range. Here the land is well watered and the valleys and steep mountain cones are verdant as lawns. The grass is scythed a half-dozen times a season. At evening the clear-cut shadows of the poplars on the close-clipped grass bring a sense of quietude to be held as a memory against some hectic day in the city.

I was attracted there scientifically because in that region of the Pic du Midi near Bagnères-de-Bigorre is found the highest permanent habitation in Europe: it is a meteorological station built precariously on a vertical peak. But as summer came on even the shady valleys became hot, so that I took my family to Brittany where Margaret and the children established themselves in a tiny cottage on a fishermen's island. I returned to explore the Pyrenees further, and it came about that I went to Andorra and eventually to Andalusia.

How one travels depends partly upon what one wishes to see. Not a few flit from one historic shrine or gallery to another. A reverent pilgrimage is made to Stratford-on-Avon, or, expectant, one enters the Pitti Palace. Again, people go abroad in search of scenery, for instance the blue-grey Scottish highlands. My Margaret sat upon a bench,



breathless at the beauty of the cathedral close at Canterbury. For me the most beautiful island will always be Korčula, backed by the purple Dalmatian Alps. Its pebble walks between rows of cypress trees brought back to mind the "Island of the Dead" that hung on our wall in the house on Bond Avenue. In my old age, if the war has not destroyed the place I shall retire to the Carmen de la Cañada, a Spanish *fonda* high above Granada and looking across the Vega to the snowcapped Sierra Nevada. I swear the moonlight comes through the olive trees differently there from anywhere else in the world.

I do not scorn the thrill of a swift trip down the Rhine gorge or a promenade about the walls of Carcassonne. It was a great moment when I first entered the classic Bibliothèque Nationale, and a greater one when I came unknowingly upon the Rosetta Stone in the British Museum. Every one looks forward to a *fine* on a Paris sidewalk or a *café Turco* on the Piazza San Marco while watching the Sunday morning parade. "Thrill" is a dangerous word, having been misused by glorified guide books. Ladies of the Springfield Culture Club love to tell how they were thrilled thinking of Abélard while standing in the shadow of some medieval structure.

I once rescued a friend from the wheels of a Félix Potin cart in Paris. He was lying down on the pavement of the Rue Saint-Jacques, which had been the old Roman thoroughfare. He explained that in *So You're Going to Paris* it said that if at any time you put your ear to these historic pavements you could hear the tramp of the Roman legions.

At one time or another I traveled in all these fashions; but a geographer has a special technique in traveling. Also, to be a human geographer and a romantic brings no incompatibility. Such a person learns to appreciate a place best by living therein as nearly as possible the life of the

people, by going native as it were. Freed from the niceties called for in order to accommodate a wife and children, I went to Andorra and went native. To get to Andorra with baggage, one mounts from Perpignan in the French Roussillon to the Cerdagne by a little railway. Passing through a gorge of olive trees, then over a windy plateau of wheat lands, one crosses easily into Spain by the route that Hannibal took with his elephants. Before the revolution one took a rattling bus to Seo de Urgel.

It is wrong to approach a place too rapidly. The mind is not prepared. There are no transitions. So I shipped my stuff ahead from Seo and tramped into Andorra. I had no more impedimenta than a rucksack and a cane with which I swung at the grasses as I passed. There was lunch in a meadow beside the rushing river that rises in the cool *comas*, the cirques, far above the Andorran villages. There was a simple supper in an Andorran inn. It was a sizable building, and I mentioned its pretentiousness to the keeper.

"I could build a good inn," he said. "I was a smuggler for thirty years."

Now to live the life of the people one must go to an inn for natives rather than one for foreigners. Inquire at what hour the peasantry get up in the morning, and rise at that hour. So I did. In a clear October dawn I made friends with a farmer and, a scythe over my shoulder, I was off with him to his high hayfields, reached only by a trail. There for the day we harvested the sweet grass and put it green upon a frame that covered the mule. In descending only the nose and tail of the beast showed, so that the whole looked like a walking haystack.

I learned to rise while the night was over the town to join the lumbermen. We would ride mules bareback up shadowed canyons, refrigerated by icy streams, until on the shoulder of the mountain we came out into the sunlight.

The mule's body would heat the inside of my legs while the outside grew cold. After getting off the mule my legs seemed permanently fashioned like wishbones, and it was only as the sun struck me that I became straight again. We would have breakfast in a meadow in the mountain sunlight: a breakfast of cold stew, hunks of bread, and wine. On the Andorran tables there are no drinking glasses but a single *pourru*. This is a carafe with an oblique spout which will give a fine stream when tipped. It is held at arm's length, and the stream is shot between barely opened teeth. I knew one man with a tooth out who could hit the cavity perfectly with the wine. But in the field one drinks out of a *bota*. This is a goatskin bag with the hair inside. One holds it aloft and shoots the stream two feet to the mouth. To miss is bad manners. The night I left Andorra, the head lumberman, who spoke only Catalan, sat with me and penciled out my finest passport. It read in French, *Un bon garçon*, which stands for the English "A good guy."

Evenings, we men went to a well deserved rest in some café. One night the waitresses set aside the tables and there was a dance. The dance *à la mode* in Andorra was the polka, which I had learned too many years before in dancing school. They wanted to know if I could do the Charleston or the Black Bottom, both pronounced with a mountain Catalan inflection. No, but I could do a *danse nègre*—in plain English, a shuffle. One night I called upon them to do a true Spanish dance, and so they brought in their champion, a fat but graceful *señora*. She must have a man, and I was chosen as the man. I was a *howling* success. I use the word advisedly.

So firmly did I establish myself as an Andorran that I was appointed to an official committee from Las Escaldas to attend the annual fête at the high village of Ordino. We arose

early and followed a precipitous short cut to the village—there was no road to Ordino. When we arrived, dancing had already begun in the tiny village square, to the horns of six rather terrible Spanish musicians. Each tiny balcony, hung with gay shawls, was filled with onlookers. The high point of the day was the banquet tendered us by the town.

All of which brings me to a digression. In order to explain the structure of an Andorran mountain house I must tell about their stables, and must elaborate upon manure in general. Europeans have a different attitude toward manure piles from ours: A woman took me from her clean house to the door and showed me a squared pile of cow dung in the immediate yard, saying, "Señor, isn't it beautiful?" It was, for it meant prosperity. Once I met a little old lady with a white kerchief on her head and a basket with a napkin over it, going up to her mountain garden above one of the *gaves*. I said that it was a fine day and she replied that also it was one of *bonne chance*. When I asked why the day was of such good fortune she said, "Behold!" Under the napkin she had exactly fourteen pieces of donkey manure which she had picked up in the road and was taking to her garden. I have slept above the tree line in a shepherd's stone hut which was roofed with dried, square cow flocs. Manure is valuable and should be spoken of with respect.

In Andorra the ground floor of every mountain house is devoted to the beasts. The stable is not cleaned until the cows have built up their underfooting so that their backs scrape the living-room floor; then the farmer begins a quarrying process which is terrific in the strongest sense. One day when I was running before a breathtaking rain-storm into the village a man shouted, "Jump in here." I did, literally, for he had just begun quarrying and I landed in a place as yet untouched. We scraped off some boxes and

sat down in the stable door just out of the rain, and watched little rivers form in the yard. The stench was awful. I could stand it no longer, and was about to risk his judgment of me by walking out into the pelting rain when he touched my shoulder and said, "It's nice in here, isn't it?"

Such a house was our banquet place. We pushed through the beasts on the lower floor and mounted to the living quarters. In the kitchen were half a dozen women cooking over the fireplace. We men went into the low dining room, climbed over benches and sat down to an unforgettable feast, the *pièce de résistance* of which was rabbits and wild mushrooms. With every Andorran meal there are two wines and two liqueurs, free. My rather vague memory suggests that there were more at this meal. In any case there was much lusty singing. After the meal I went to pay my count to the *patrón* of the *fonda*; but he refused me. He said that I didn't eat much, and anyway I knew his brother-in-law. There is a happy geographical axiom that, the more remote the people, the greater the hospitality.

Andorra valley bottoms are narrow, and level land is scarce; and always there are the dreaded mountain shadows that keep crops from maturing. The great crop, as in most mountains, is hay. Hay is needed for winter stabling of the beasts. The summer pastures are hours' climb from the villages, high on the mountains above the forest zone. Here sheep, cattle, horses, and mules feed four months of the year with lonely herders.

I went up to see the autumnal drive of the larger beasts. They literally poured down the mountain trails, converging on the settlements. The towns then hold fairs to sell the beasts they cannot stable for the winter. I helped drive down sixteen hundred sheep and goats: one sheep in five had a tinkling bell, and the goats carried long booming bells. The repeated echoes in the canyon were strange music.

This movement up and down the mountain slopes, a seasonal rhythm imposed upon life, is the great note in the Andorran symphony.

Smuggling in Andorra is not a legend but an active profession. Being on the border of two countries, independent of both, the natives find it easy. The stranger is kept as ignorant of the fact as possible, but much more tobacco is raised than the Andorrans can use and more mules than are needed. High in the mountains is a well equipped *posada* where men and mules can be kept for the night. There are no recognized routes of traffic that pass this inn, but I know of a number of near-by mountain passes which the initiated can negotiate even in darkness. The inn is prosperous and not unattractive with its rows of copper kettles on the wall. All night a stew is kept warm on the fire. There one night I was startled out of a doze when the door burst open and two tired Catalans threw themselves on the benches while the *patrón* went out to see to the mules. I made room for the men beside the fire and asked no questions.

Some of the villages of Andorra are lost in high valleys. Life is pretty meager. No benevolent government looks after health in such places. One house I visited had but a single glass to let in light, though there were cracks in the floor which let in odors from the stable below. The baby in the cradle cried while the flies covered its face. Outside, the wind and the stream roared in competition. In the dark room of another house I saw a movement in the ashes of a cold fireplace: there was a tiny toddler in the ashes. While the mother looked with astonishment at my concern I took the baby out and brushed it off. The baby looked at me sadly and then crawled back.

There is nothing more dramatic in mountain life than the coming of the evening shadow. With the mountain crest

as a fulcrum it swings over the valley and up the opposing slopes as swiftly as the shadow of a summer's cloud on a day of high wind. From a mountain spur in Andorra I have seen the warm sunlight of afternoon changed in a single minute to cold, diffused light, shrouding the entire valley with cold. The plowman and his oxen I had been watching far below were suddenly almost lost to sight. I had one favorite place where I used to stand at this sudden dropping of the veil of evening. It was on the trail to Las Escaldas where it passes the village of Engordany. The heat of day, in the thin mountain air, was almost immediately changed to cold night. The evening star came out as suddenly over the Sierra de Leix as if it had been turned on by a switch.

Then passing me would come the villagers from their fields. Here come two girls with hayrakes over their shoulders. I have heard them singing in the fields during the day, but now they are tired and silent. Along comes the priest who greets me with a deep-toned "Buenas tardes, señor." A little girl drives before her two pigs, with a tiny bouquet in her hand which she has gathered in the woods. Now comes a family in a mountain oxcart, a boy with a stick leading the beast. In the cart the mother is nursing the baby at her breast. All day the baby has lain on a napkin in the fields reaching for butterflies. So they pass, one by one. After they are all gone I watch the lights blinking in distant Andorra-la-Viella and then take my way back to the light of my inn, in tune now with life in these gorges.

From Andorra I went to Madrid to read, and I saw the King of Spain and he saw me. I had had a suit of corduroy made by the single tailor in Andorra. It was a pretty outlandish affair, but I loved it. Also my one store suit was having a month of creases removed. So my first day in Madrid I walked the broad boulevards in Andorran uni-

form. Suddenly down the street came a machine full of brass hats and the King in the back seat. I turned, rudely but naturally, to stare. Such an apparition was I that the King turned, rose in his seat, and returned the stare until the auto whisked him around the corner. I wanted to wave, but though I have winked at a duchess I have never been flippant with a king. My costume was in contrast with the well dressed people of Madrid. Especially were the young officers grand and many of them really beautiful. I watched with admiration as one handsome officer in a fine cape helped his ladies down from a difficult railway carriage step. Two pretty Spanish girls followed, and with what grace he turned to offer his aid! Then he saluted, turned about, stepped on his long cape and fell flat on his face.

I found myself in the old Moorish town of Güejar Sierra in a steep-sided valley in the Sierra Nevada. In contrast to the grey buildings of Catalan Andorra, here the houses were white, and from the windows hung long streamers of red peppers drying in the sun. But my first day there was in the rain. I wanted to make inquiries about my contemplated climbs in the mountains; so I went to the café, where I knew I should find workers driven in by the storm. I entered the inn and, with every seat taken, stood at a bar of sorts and had wine. I did not know enough Spanish to address the room and say, "Gentlemen, may I talk with some one who knows mountain ways?" Yet, standing, I could not easily single out one person for conversation. So I began playing the trick of making a coin disappear. They soon gathered about me. Then I did a contortionist's stunt of stepping over a cane. They dashed out to get the village contortionist, who, of course, put me in the shade. By that time a place was made for me at a table, and during the rest of the day I learned much about the mountain ways.

It seemed best that I attack the Sierras from the south



slope. My first morning there was a cold November day. I ate breakfast in one of those chilled, tiled rooms which the Spanish construct. The day was cloudy and there was little use trying to climb peaks, so I set out for a brisk walk to get my almost congealed blood circulating. Behold, all the villagers, young and old, were ascending a mountain path.

If there is one rule of the art of travel that I am sure will hold, it is: If all the village is going up a path, go with it. My first lesson in such manners had been the evening when I went to catch eels with the good people of Ely.

So up the path I went. Two men came riding a white horse. They dismounted and with sweeps of their hats offered me the horse. I never saw the men again. Soon, as was proper, I dismounted, and with the aid of some women hoisted an old lady on the horse. I never saw the old lady or the horse again. Mountain speech is always guttural and difficult to understand. I could get no clue as to where we were going.

Finally we arrived in a zone of mountain growth given over to chestnuts (*castaños*). No more beautiful tree grows in Spain. It is huge of bole, has a fine wide spread and bears myriads of nuts per tree. So we were to gather chestnuts! They are a staple food of the peasants. A handful suffices the workman for his lunch; they are used in soups as a purée, like potatoes, and for dessert. All day we broke open the burs with mallets and dropped the shiny fruit into sacks.

Each family had its own tree, and I attached myself to one family. The scene was as much like the second act of an opera as ever I have lived. Under one tree a family would take up a song, which would be passed on to the next group. When it came my family's turn to sing, I, being the guest artist, must needs sing. Now I have the

volume and temperament of a great tenor but not the voice. From early training I happened to know the words of hymns, and from lack of later training knew the words of few other songs; so I sang hymns. Finding the tempo did not suit the vivacious Andalusian temperament, I jazzed the hymns up a bit and got away with it.

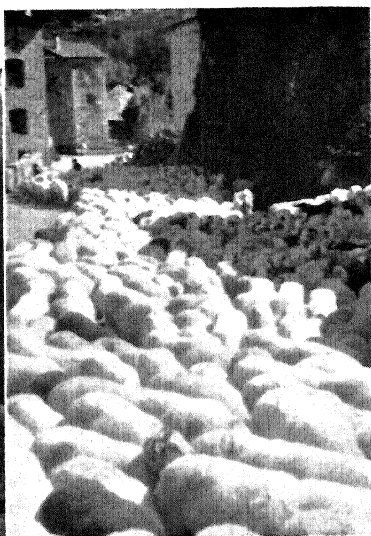
Thus I learned to travel. I can write no adequate description of Generalife, which I love. I could never do justice to Mont-Saint-Michel. After saying that there was a Byzantine influence in the Duomo San Marco I should be wordless, for my travel has been much with lowly and lovable people. In time I came to make the up-drive with Savoyans when the cattle, released from their long winter, start for the fresh alps. I was with the Vlachs when they finished their nomadic journey across the Balkans by placing their cows and sheep and goats in boats to take them to island pastures. And I know something of village life in the Karawanken Alps between Austria and Yugoslavia. The main rule that I have is to follow the villagers when they go out to the day's work in the fields.



After the day's work we would go to the inns to talk over this and that.



Vagabond in Andorra.



I helped drive sixteen hundred sheep and goats down from the summer pastures.



## XVII

### AND A FIG TREE IN THE GARDEN

SOMEHOW the prow of our ship seemed to be always breaking for uncharted seas, a bone in her teeth. We would start out for commonplace ports and discover ourselves in bays of adventure. To go to Brittany for the summer is in France a perfectly conventional thing to do. Upon the recommendation of the *Guide Bleu* we headed for Quiberon, as a pleasant seaside resort for a summer's sojourn. Quiberon has a reputation for picturesqueness, for it has a large fleet of fishing smacks with red sails, the sailors wear tams and dungarees of the same color, and there are always fishwives about the wharves working on the nets. But Quiberon in summertime turned out to be a South Haven, Michigan, only not so good. The villas among the dunes were ugly, as only the French can build them. The hotel was filled with Parisiennes in shorts, and the beach was covered with people in swimming suits, people who would have looked better with more clothes on. Anyway, the sand kept blowing into the children's eyes.

So we turned about, got us a decrepit car, and pouring a libation to the God of Chance went to Ile aux Moines. I had read of this Island of Monks as we came north in the train. It lay in the Gulf of Morbihan whose many islets are noted for the placidity of life. The book went on to say that our island was settled by monks, implying that

they were not always celibate. The women today were said to be *grande* and of a Spanish type, and the men were mostly away on fishing boats on the high seas. This sounded almost like Adamic's village of women in the Dalmatian Alps. Perhaps because the men are away, the guide went on, the island "is calm and tranquil" and "the houses white are surrounded by pretty gardens. . . . It offers reposeful landscapes where camellias and mimosas flourish *en pleine terre*." Enough! We were decided. We arrived at Port-Blanc and there engaged a deaf-and-dumb sailor in a dory with yellow sails to ferry us across the gut that separated the island from the mainland.

Sometimes the pleasant things of life unfold themselves gradually, and then again one rounds a corner to see happy prospects—many of them, all at one time. As we came to the dock we knew that for one summer at least life's cup would be full. If the island was calm it was not that afternoon tranquil but superlatively gay. The high tide was lapping at the quay and the walk that led to the village. On this walk people were dancing before the cafés that were strung along the way. The cafés had gardens and tables before which people sat drinking. I expected the leading lady to step out and announce the chorus with, "Ah, here come the villagers now."

The women were in huge skirts (*jupes*) of black silk. Each had a lace headdress that proclaimed the village of her birth. Over her gown each wore a gaily embroidered apron. The men were mostly sailors from the coastwise ships and were dressed in neat blue. There were a few farmers wearing short tight jackets with silver buttons and broad-brimmed hats with black velvet ribbons hanging down the back to their waists. They all danced hand in hand in circles, nodding their heads and jerking their hands, the feet going continuously in a sort of shuffle. The

dance is so old that it is Celtic rather than French. The music was from a squeaky bagpipe and a flute.

There are few accommodations on the island for strangers and the little Hôtel du Golfe was filled. By nightfall we had established ourselves in a cottage with three tiny rooms, under a straw thatch. The floor was hard-packed earth. Our dinner that night, we cooked on a trivet over the coals of our fireplace. A knock at the door, and there stood Grand'mère Congal bearing a bowl of hot soup by way of welcome. When I saw the old lady bowing, toothless and grinning, I knew that my people were among friends and in pleasant ways so that the next day I took the steamer for Vannes and went back to my mountains. But Margaret wrote me letters, and from them I piece out the accounts that follow.

There came to be two summers for my family on the island. The second summer Margaret obtained a quite fine house, but an old one which was completely *iloise*. It had tiled floors and old peasant furniture. Besides the casement glass it had shutters that were closed when storms came off the sea. There was a yard with a wall about it and a high, wooden gate. Just below the wall a disabled sailor used to play Breton tunes on an accordion. The yard consisted of walks between clipped box hedges. There were mimosa trees for shade and, as Margaret wrote, "a fig tree in the garden." Did you ever lie in a chair and listen to the figs plumping onto the garden walk, shaken down by a brisk sea wind?

There has never been anything in my travels quite like the Ile aux Moines. It had a simplicity of structure and settlement and life in general which was consistent. There were no automobiles on the island and few horses. Mostly the carts were drawn by oxen. A fisherman's wife, smoking a pipe, brought our baggage to the house in a wheel-

barrow. Brittany is low country in Morbihan and there is a large horizon and lots of sky over which sea clouds are continually sailing. There is a perpetual wind off tidal flats. The wide, open sky and the wind somehow give one a sense of freedom and room to breathe. And the winding lanes to unexpected settlements are always bringing one upon delightful surprises.

The island is Druid country and is but a short sail from Carnac where the great *alignements* are—eleven hundred monoliths standing in rows marking some neolithic and mysterious ritual. On the island everywhere are menhirs, single columns of stone erected by the early Celts, and dolmens, great tables of stone supported on pillars and so forming a sizable room underneath. Perhaps all of these were originally covered with earth tumuli, and the rooms underneath were reached by long tunnels—the secret chambers of the esoteric Druid priests who once ruled the savage Celts.

The Bretons are not really French, nor are they touched with modernity. One does not scratch a Breton very deeply to find a Druid, and, as for modernity, the old sailor in whose *sinagot* (an ancient form of sailboat) we made excursions spoke nothing but Breton. The Breton *pardons* (pilgrimages to gain holiness) and the Druid rites never seemed to me far apart. Impelled by a superstitious devotion, the whole countryside will attend the *pardons*. Sins are washed away in the fountain, ills are cured as the sacred procession passes and souls are enlarged. Instead of the priest at the altar I seemed to see a hoary Druid exhorting his people as he stood under the sacred oak and beneath the mistletoe. We have all in one fashion or another perverted the teachings of Jesus because we would not surrender our ancient mores.

But even the Druids are not perfectly remembered. To



some it was not they who had built the inexplicable monuments but it was the gories, little folk who resemble the nains and the korrigans. The gories are manikins, no higher than one's knee. They dance in the moonlight upon the stone tables and can be heard on windy nights scampering down the lanes between the houses. One had better remain indoors. I met an old man who as a boy had been caught by the gories and made to dance until his heart almost burst. The only place one is really safe is in the sanctuary of the church.

Life is archaic not only in the imagination but in the ways of life. A *sinagot* is a large, black dory, wide in beam and with red sails. Before the coming of Caesar these people, the Veneti, sailed in hide boats. It was the Romans who taught them wood construction, and I quite believe that the design has not much changed in these two thousand years. The flail is used, and the sickle for harvesting the wheat. There is the woden shoe, and there are the medieval costumes.

Of course, one must not entirely toss aside the possibility of gories. Nor must one scorn stories of miracles. The Bretons say that Ste. Anne experienced her Immaculate Conception while in Brittany and, being sailor-bred, did not hesitate to go to Palestine in a boat so that the child might be born there. In any case I can tell you a true story of fertility that seemed blessed by the virgin. A French friend took Margaret to a little mainland shrine before which women prayed in order that they might be blessed with children. She showed a thank offering on the altar which was her gift in return for her son Henri, and suggested that Margaret kneel and wish and pray. Margaret did. "Now," said madame, with a twinkle in her eye, "it is necessary to send for Monsieur Peattie."

Next summer one of the Half Souls went to Brittany,

and Margaret commissioned her to lay the wax image of a child on the altar inscribed with the words, "*Merci de Madame Peattie.*" For since then Michael had come into our family. The friend who executed the commission was a spinster; she did not pray, but fled so fertile a spot.

In the cottage late one night there were candles to be seen. Margaret was bending over Rod, and a boy had been sent for the island doctor. There were days of delirium. The doctor kept asking if the sore spot on the side was *dur* and Margaret had to rush about to find a dictionary to learn that the word meant "hard." The family learned perforce a great deal of French in those troubled days. Then it was decided that Rod had acute appendicitis. A storm was on. If it abated he could be moved in an open motor boat to Vannes for an operation; otherwise it must be done in the cottage. Margaret, a doctor's daughter, looked at the dirt floor and wondered. Then human sympathy broke down the French formality. The aristocracy, the folk who came for the summer and who had held aloof from the transplanted cottage family, came to the rescue. The master of the château devoted his ice machine to Rod's purpose. Delicious food arrived on mysterious trays. Madame Jollivet lit a candle in the chapel for *pauvre* Rod. The neighbors literally hung about the door. The crisis passed, and Margaret and the children emerged with the warm friendship of the island folk.

Rod had hardly recovered from his hazard before the Peatties were again tempting Fate. Margaret and the children went rowing in the harbor. A French boy invited them, and Margaret supposed there was no danger. But just outside the harbor is a tide which sweeps about the island twice daily with such ferocity that the natives call it the Wolf. I have seen a three-masted schooner caught in its grip and whirled about like a chip. The tide begins

slowly and then suddenly pours in and then out of the bay, making great rips; and on the surface are whirlpools that make an ugly, sucking noise. Suddenly in this tide the dory with Margaret and the children was caught. Margaret took the oars from childish hands, but the water seemed to seize the oars and lift them from the locks. In the midst of this struggle a storm came up. It was one of those sudden storms when the sky goes black and waves mount as at the command of some evil genie. The boat was pulled sideways to the tidal rips and was half filled with water from the skies. As they were borne out to sea they could hear the howl of the wind and the crash of the waves hurling themselves against the rocks. They were bearing down on a four-masted schooner which was at anchor far out in the bay. They raised their feeble voices against the wind, and as they raced past the schooner a rope was thrown to them. Carefully the small boat was pulled back alongside the larger one, and ropes with loops were let over the side. Then one woman and three badly frightened children put each a foot in a loop and were hoisted to the safe deck. They were shaken and soaked; but the cabin was warm, and there was hot stew on the stove in the galley.

It was hours before the men dared row them ashore in a dory with six oars. In the meantime the little rowboat had been found wrecked on the shore. When the bedraggled group got back to the island some of their friends had already gone to the chapel to pray for their souls. What a welcome they had when they returned, wet and weary! The family of Bernard, the French boy, have remained our staunch friends through these fifteen years.

But that was too much for me. I could stand for acts of God but not for the acts of the Peatties. I left the mountains and came to the island. It seemed a long journey, but one morning before my family was up I tramped the lane

that led to the house and the fig tree and whistled outside the garden gate so as not to startle them by walking in. This time I stayed to enjoy the island. It was the epitome of all that was Breton. Just as at Ile aux Coudres in the St. Lawrence I had found my best of habitant culture on an island, so here was the best of Brittany. I stayed for the fall threshing. Some mechanics from the mainland ran the threshing machine, but mostly island women tossed the sheaves from the conical piles into the hopper. The women wore short skirts and had handkerchiefs to protect their hair. As the last sheaf went into the grinding machine a man was standing ready with an accordion. Music struck up, wine was passed, and all the workers and onlookers joined in a great circle and danced on the straw-strewn courtyard. I sometimes think that simple people are best.

One day there was great excitement. A boy ran into the village with news that a fisher boat had been sighted returning from the sea. It was weeks before the boats were expected back. Word spread quickly, and women began hurrying along the lane to the hill with the grey cross where they could look out to the open sea. Was it that it had been a good year and the ship was returning early, or were they returning because some one was injured? Was it Pierre's ship or that of Jean? Then the ship was recognized and the women hurried down to see their men or to get news of those who had not returned. Sometimes in years of storm a little group of women forms daily on the hill with the cross to watch for a belated boat or for a boat that never returns.

After you have counted out a few catastrophes—and none of us is free from them—the island has a calm sort of routine that works itself into one's blood. There is the daily trip to the baker's and for the mail. When the tide is high one swims and then lies on the warm *plage*. At

low tide one takes the children out on the rocks to hunt for crabs, or digs the little blue clams that are so good when steamed. And then pleasant French visitors come at tea-time to sit under the fig tree.

The French have a philosophy of leisure which after a time takes hold of one. Our friend Baron de la Garde once bought a flower-pot factory. "It was a terrible experience," he shuddered. "Suddenly every one wanted flower pots. I had no time for my family. So I sold my factory, and now I am happy!" Gradually I, like my family, became truly *iloise*. It was as if I had heard the song of the sirens and then never cared to leave. There were two Americans who came to live near by on the mainland many years ago—and they never left. We almost suffered or enjoyed their fate. We began looking about for a house to buy—actually priced one and made calls on the *avocat*. And then our sense of humor saved us. We gave away the pet rabbits to some French children and wrenched ourselves from tranquillity on the excuse that one must see Mont-Saint-Michel before one dies.

XVIII  
IN PARIS WE UNDERGO  
A METAMORPHOSIS

MY family had been in Paris a month before I arrived. Margaret had gone up early so as to place the children in school while I stayed high in the mountains until the snow drove me down. After I had arrived, looked over the little establishment and realized the life my three were living, I sat down and laughed until the tears rolled down my cheeks. Nothing could have been more *tout à fait bourgeois*. They were in a very proper apartment on the Boulevard du Montparnasse, midway between the Café Dôme and the Closerie des Lilas. That did not mean that the building was in any way Latin Quarter. We were the only non-French in the building. The whole set-up was middle-class and *très gentil*. Margaret had this impressed upon her by the landlady, who explained that Margaret must not go hatless to the postbox at the corner. It was not done from this apartment.

The morning when I arrived Margaret was having *café au lait* and *croissants* in bed, served by a little Alsatian maid. The children were having chocolate in the dining room, all dressed for school. Then they fastened black, square book boxes on their backs and, with the *bonne* to see them across the boulevard, off they went. Even between themselves their conversation was half French. The living room was what got me. It was a sort of Louis

Quatorze imitation with yellow brocade in the wall panels and a marble fireplace in which we burned briquettes of compounded coal dust.

Anne particularly loved this new adaptation. She was seven at the time. At first the quick French of her playmates had confused her. I remember her waking in the morning and saying, "Mother, are they still talking French?" But then, like most youngsters, she really came to substitute French for English. She would ask us the English equivalent of French words. I used to make her say for me "*Je regret*" just to hear her roll the *r*'s. Rod at eleven years of age had a more intellectual approach and did indeed win *bons mots* at his school. I never agreed, however, with the school system. It was of the old-fashioned rote method, and lessons were best learned by heart. The hours were too long, the drill too severe; there was too much homework, and there was very little play.

Anne, being younger, did not go to school all day. So the first afternoon I was to take her to the Luxembourg Gardens. All the best children in our region went there, and we were trying desperately to keep up with the conventions of the apartment in which we lived. Besides, the Luxembourg Gardens were fun. Like the Kensington Gardens they were designed for children; but, whereas there is something large and open and free about the gardens ruled over by Peter Pan, the Luxembourg Gardens have a certain amount of formality. When Anne and I arrived she excused herself from me with a French phrase and walked up directly to a row of *bonnes* with white caps who were knitting while their charges played about. Anne bowed before each and shook hands with each. She did not go directly down the line: there seemed to be some order of seniority or caste. Then a dozen children, the children to whom the *bonnes* were attached, stopped their

play and came, six-year-olds, to shake hands with Anne. Small fry, but little French bourgeois and *très gentil*. After I had read my paper for an hour I called Anne to give up following a huge wooden *cerceau* (all French are adept with the hoop) and come home. She then shook hands with all the children and the nurses in reverse order.

I remember once sitting on a hill overlooking a tennis court. A young man on leaving carefully shook hands with every onlooker. But he returned for a sweater, and then shook hands with every one all over again. A professor in his office will shake hands as you leave. He opens the door for you and shakes your hand again. Then he descends the stairs with you to the outside door and shakes hands with you fervently.

I think that the height of French convention was reached by Anne one Christmas. It was a queer Christmas in the little apartment. Rod was away in the American Hospital where at last he had had his troublesome appendix removed. He said to me one day: "Will you take this *Webster's Dictionary* from the room? It has an appendix." We were at the hospital often, and Anne was at home where she carried on secret operations behind closed doors. She and her nurse were working over something. On Christmas morning there was a knock at our bedroom door at an early hour. It opened on a little girl in a long white nightgown who made a formal bow. In one hand she held a tight, little bouquet and in the other a scroll. The scroll was on lace paper such as was used in old-fashioned valentines. Solemnly she presented it to us. On the solid center of the scroll in a tiny, neat hand was written:

*Mes chers Parents*

*Bon et joyeux Noël!*

*C'est votre petite fille qui vous fait ce souhait. Merci, chers parents, de vos bontés pour moi, et en retour je promets d'être bien sage.*



## WE UNDERGO A METAMORPHOSIS 191

*Je souhaite aussi que l'année 1928 soit bonne pour vous et que vous soyez, ni l'un ni l'autre, malade.*

*Je vous aime beaucoup, papa, mama, ainsi Bob que je le de tout mon cœur sera bientôt guéri.*

*Je vous redis, Bon et joyeux Noël!*

*Votre petite fille qui vous aime,*

ANNE

The formality of this is somehow lost in translation. It reads:

My dear Parents

Good and joyous Christmas!

It is your daughter that makes this wish. Thanks, dear parents, for your goodness to me, and in return I promise to be very good.

I wish also that the year 1928 may be a good one for you and that you will be, neither one nor the other, ill.

I love you very much, Papa, Mamma, and also Bob [Rod] who I hope with all my heart will be entirely cured.

I say again to you, Good and Joyous Christmas.

Your little daughter who loves you,

ANNE

One doesn't go to bed early Christmas Eve in Paris. There is a midnight service in the churches that should not be missed. Carols and always the great "Noël, Noël" are sung. We went to huge St. Eustace. There the best opera singers performed. The floor space was literally covered with people. Only a few candles lit the great nave. After religious homage there is merrymaking. The restaurants are crowded for a festive meal. We had no plans and found ourselves in the region of the Halles, the city markets. In that district is an upstairs restaurant called Le Chien que Fume because of a sign showing a dog with a pipe in its mouth. The French would classify the place as lower bourgeois. We were in evening dress. When Madame saw that she got down from her high desk of authority and

ushered us to a table where another couple was so dressed. The other patrons were little shopkeepers on fiesta, dressed in their best, but the men were not in what the French call *un smoking*. How polite we were, we four! We men were both professors and had much in common. He was a professor of barbering. We danced very sedately. But I could see that the other people felt that we were out of place, we somehow cramped their style. Finally the orchestra leader, violin in hand, came over to ask if he could do us honor by playing our national anthem. Then the whole room stood, glasses in hand, while they played—the Swedish National Anthem.

Even in Paris, however, Margaret and the children were not always circumspect. In the Luxembourg Gardens there is a large fountain and pool in which the youngsters are allowed to sail boats. There is, indeed, an old man, still there I believe, who has boats to rent. But the boats are all much the same model. Rod had brought with him the model of a Breton boat with red sails which was much envied. The way home from the gardens lay through the park of the Observatoire, and there also was a fountain. No well-bred French child would think of sailing his boat in the Observatoire fountain. But Rod did, and his boat got stuck on one of the spouting turtles. Naturally he got a long stick and tried to push it off. A group of sympathizing adults gathered about. A fat gendarme arrived. He said that it was *défendu* to sail boats in the fountain, and that it was time to close the park. He forced all from the park and then went to the far end to lock the other gate. The French were indignant.

"It is not closing time."

"He merely wants the boat for his little boy."

One man said, "This is all the result of capitalism."

So the crowd had Rod take off his shoes; they lifted him

over the spiked-iron fence, and then Rod went out over the sloping, slimy fountain surface to get his boat. The gendarme saw what was up, blew shrilly on his whistle and came racing back, his cape flying like wings behind him. Rod was lifted back over the fence just in time. The crowd ran in all directions, shouting, "Vive la France!" Margaret took her two charges and fled. As soon as the policeman could open the gate he was after them. Margaret raced down the Rue Notre-Dames-des-Champs. Then she saw a sign "Public Bath." She dashed in and demanded three hot baths, *immediately*. The French are too gallant ever to arrest a lady while in the bath.

My task in Paris was to read about mountains in the orderly library of the Institut de Géographie, which is a department of the Sorbonne. It was housed in a separate building which was rather colorless inside and sometimes cold: I never got used to European economy of heat in winter. The professors of the institute (there were a half-dozen of them) were most kind and used to help me in book selection. I am not a good linguist, and it seemed that they could read anything. One would hand me a volume saying that here was something that I should read.

"Heavens, I can't read that!"

"Ah, then, you do not read Polish."

The academic fraternity is a pleasant one: a professorial title gains for the bearer acceptance in any similar circle the world over. But the French did not entertain me *en famille*: I was invited in all that time to one afternoon party, and that for men; they offered Margaret no hospitality. This was so different from our treatment later in Germany, England and Italy.

At four o'clock the library would close, and I would walk home along the Boule Mich, stopping at a kiosk for a spray of mimosa or a few sous' worth of violets; but as

often as not I walked along the Seine or followed the ever amusing side streets of Paris. These were a delight that never wore out. In winter fog and even rain I have tramped miles and miles of Paris byways, stopping in some workmen's café to hear the talk and see the types that only that city seems to produce.

And then our life began to change. We underwent a metamorphosis, thanks to our friends. We were attempting to read the French classics, and our tables held copies of Zola, Flaubert and Daudet. Gradually these disappeared and Joyce, Stein, *transition* and *This Quarter* began to take their place. Instead of the much-loved catalogue of the Musée de Cluny there were brochures of Dadaist and surrealist exhibits. We bought books on modern architecture and the new interior decoration.

A lot of this was due to Dick and Alice Lee Meyers. We had known Dick and Alice Lee since college days. Dick had perpetrated some of the music for *Pranks of Paprika*. He was then Paris editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. He always had good taste about clothes and feminine accessories and was required to take in the style shows at the great dressmaking establishments. We used to go with him.

Dick would say, "What do you think of that green outfit with the wide belt?"

I would reply, "You know, Dick, I prefer the blonde that came in a minute ago."

Dick was huge and was always happy. He knew the best eating places in Paris, or in Berlin or in Budapest, for that matter. I never saw a man weaken so before a tray of pastry. Alice Lee was tall, but no one could call her fat. She had lots of drive, and Dick called her the Amazon. He said that she was happier in the Grand Central Station than at home. Their apartment was exquisite and ultramodern, and to it came many interesting people. The center of the liv-

ing room was a grand piano. Dick played with a lyric touch. Both of them devoted much of their time to doing good for other people, and Alice Lee had a dress shop in which she employed Russian refugees. I have little idea how many people were indebted to them. We certainly were.

It was they who introduced us to Madame Boznanska, one of the greatest of the Polish artists and a friend of Paderewski. Her painting was entirely original in genre, and works by her were proudly owned by the great galleries. She was not only a most distinguished woman but a most extraordinary one. I used to see her at the Dôme. Now the Dôme entertains more people in unusual and outlandish costume than any other café in the world. But Madame Boznanska had them all beaten. She never discarded a garment, however worn or out of style. She was tall and elderly as I knew her. She would appear at the Dôme in a black, tight basque with a long row of buttons up the front and a hat beyond a man's description. She wore several coats and a cape which, one by one, she laid aside, and she was always accompanied by a count of sorts who had the reputation of being an expert gatherer of snipes from the sidewalk.

Even more extraordinary was her studio. It was a huge room second-floor back with tremendous sloping windows. Already you have read descriptions of it, for it once belonged to Trilby. It was literally filled with furniture, divans with stuffing sticking out of the holes, a dusty grand piano, tables covered with unwashed dishes, and canvases everywhere. Madame was saving to a degree. She would not buy a new palette but worked with a broken one. Because of waste she never cleaned this, and so it was covered with piles of old paint. She painted on boards or bits of canvas. Almost priceless pictures were stacked about, unheeded. Old frames were everywhere. Once, in

order to save money, she sent by invitation a picture to the Pittsburgh International, but in an old frame two inches too long. But I have not yet told how extraordinary the room was for its inhabitants.

Madame lived within sight of the vivisection laboratory of the University of Paris. In protest she had taken to protecting mice. I saw, I mean it, thousands at a time. When I sat down on a sofa mice sprayed from the seat as if I had dropped into water. Margaret has that precious fear of a mouse characteristic of women, but here, perforce, became used to them. There was always the weird noise of their scurrying. They ran up the picture wires. They ran across the walls in waves—well, like the bending of grass before the wind. Madame threw grain on the floor, and we were surrounded with mice; we were covered with mice; and before we left the studio I went through my pockets lest I might take away with me some of her pets.

Though we owed most to Dick and Alice Lee Meyers, there were other friends who meant much to us in our new life. There were Stephen and Rosemary Benét. All men were in love with Rosemary, and I suspect the women were in love with Steve. They lived in a suburban house with a garden which in its charm suited them well. Margaret was with Steve the day he got word of the grand prize for his *John Brown's Body*. Life had not treated the Benéts too well, but now Steve was affluent. He gave a big dinner but was so overcome by the excitement of his success that he could not drink his own champagne.

For a time I went to the mountains to get some glacier experience. I climbed in the snow fields of the Vanoise, nearly lost a guide through a faulty snow bridge on the Mer de Glace and had grand experience on the ice of the Bernese Oberland. During that time Margaret lived with

stimulating Pat and Louise O'Brien. Pat is better known as Howard Vincent O'Brien, the columnist. When I returned to Paris we saw a good deal of Janet Flanner, whose Paris letters for years in the *New Yorker* were signed Genêt. Margaret had known Archibald MacLeish since the days when she smoked corn silk with him. Ada MacLeish was a personality in her own right and an accomplished singer interested in the most modern in music. Though our meetings have been too rare MacLeish and I seemed to get along well toward friendship. Paris was then a city of isms and the strong support of this or that school of expression. In this spirit one night at dinner MacLeish said that Hemingway was the only person who could write English prose. I said nothing because I was not competent to pass on Hemingway. In Madrid in a moment of boredom I had read his *Fiesta* (published in America under the title *The Sun Also Rises*). On completion of the book I was even further bored. I knew well enough that here was a great stylist, but I could not go the content of the book because I was a romanticist and Hemingway was a realist in facts that did not interest me. His school of writing had been too recently established for me to have become educated in such matters.

One character of the book, Brett, was modeled after an Englishwoman of title who was to be seen in the cafés where we talked late at night, and I had a curiosity to identify her. I would pick out some attractive woman who was talking vivaciously and say, "Is that Brett?" There was always a laugh and negation. One night on my way home from work I stopped in at the Closerie des Lilas to read my paper and have an apéritif. As I sat alone at a table by the door, down the stairs from the game room came a loosely put-together woman, swearing like a trooper. I stared at her in amazement.

She walked directly up to me and said, "What's it to you, you blankety blankety blank?"

I meekly said, "Nothing at all, madame. Nothing at all."

When I told the story that night to my friends they roared with laughter and told me that at last I had seen Brett. I resolved to search no further for Hemingway's characters.

Thus Paris became for us, not a series of experiences in middle-class French life, but our first important lesson in the sophistication of modern thought. Modern music and art and literature had only begun to impinge upon the life of Columbus, Ohio. Here we were dropped into the middle of a new world. This then is the record of a stage in the development of thought. It is an argument against the American universities and colleges which by their low salaries condemn their faculties to provincialism. This going abroad was a financial strain on us, of course. Indeed, the pace was becoming too great. We decided to go to Savoy, where we could live more cheaply. Rod and I were to go ahead to explore from Annecy to Chamonix for a village inn where we could live and I could write.

As we got into the taxi to leave I turned to wave good-bye to Margaret as she stood on the fourth-floor balcony. It seemed to me that she was waving rather frantically. I did not learn for a week that she had in her hand the mail, which included a royalty check for my first book, the largest of that sort I have ever received and perhaps ever will receive. Just at the point when the Peatties are starving there has always been a passing raven that has taken notice and given manna.



## XIX

### AN INTERLUDE IN DJERBA

THE hardship which children experience while traveling is the lack of playmates. So when we left our two in a school on the shores of Lake Geneva it was no unhappiness to them. We started for Italy by way of the Simplon.

While on a train a geographer is always terribly busy trying to look from both windows at once. The *rapide* tore through Vevey and Montreux and up the elbow of the great Rhone valley into the region of vineyards where the fine Swiss wine *fondant de Sion* is made. The existence of these vineyards will bring any geographer worthy the name to discourse upon mountain winds.

There is a wind in our western states known as the Chinook. It blows, especially in winter, out of the west and down onto the plains so hot and dry that it evaporates the snow cover in a surprisingly short time. The story is told that a man started sledding eastward. He drove his sled from the bare barnyard toward the snow. He drove all day but never caught up with the retreating snow, for the Chinook was blowing. In Europe such a wind comes from the south and, blowing over the Alps, is known as the foehn. This wind is warm and dry and cures the soil in the spring. Two hours of foehn is said to be worth two weeks of sunshine. So important is it to grapes and to maize that neither of these plants is grown in Switzerland or

Austria except in regions like Sion, exposed to the foehn.

The physics of this wind is simple. A wind that starts at a mountain base at the temperature of, say, seventy degrees is cooled by expansion as it rises over the mountain to, say, fifty degrees. As it descends the far side by compression it rises in temperature to seventy degrees again. But if the wind is moist it causes precipitation as it rises, and such condensation of moisture liberates heat. This is the opposite of the cooling process created by evaporation. This liberated heat reduces loss of temperature in the ascending wind by, say, ten degrees. Thus the wind arrives at the crest with a temperature of sixty rather than fifty degrees. It will, however, still experience a twenty-degree rise of temperature as it descends. Therefore, it arrives hot and dry at the farther base of the mountain. Hence the *fondant de Sion*.

The day I first went up the Rhone valley the foehn was blowing. Into the open windows of the car came a hot, gusty, dusty wind. As always on such days the car seemed filled with babies, alternately crying and eating bananas. We were then hurled through the great tunnel and emerged on the Italian side in a cold rain. We had experienced both phases of the foehn. And the babies were asleep and the bananas consumed. A typical experience, for foehns and fretful, feeding infants always go together.

You must know the kaleidoscopic moving picture device that indicates that Jeanette MacDonald or some one is taking an opera tour of Europe. Between showings of rapid trains on curves there are glimpses of the Scala Theater in Milan, the Opera House in Berlin and an auditorium in Budapest. If Cecil de Mille were portraying our Italian tour he would give the well-known pictures of trains and glimpses of Lake Como, the Duomo at Milan, Verona in the rain, Venice in the sunlight, Bologna and a

piece of sausage, Florence and miles upon miles of galleries, the Forum at Rome, and Naples with Vesuvius in the background. He would omit some of the things that we saw at Pompeii—Will Hays would make him do that.

At Naples we met old friends, man and wife. Now the two wives were the closest of friends, and by that I mean the closest of friends. They went into a huddle of woman's conversation. The man and I went for a gloomy walk with our hands deep in our raincoat pockets.

Then he shouted, "I have it!"

"All right, show it to me."

"I know a man who is American minister to Albania. We could visit him and get back before the girls came up for air."

We grabbed the next train for Bari, the jumping-off place. There was a short interval between the train arrival and the boat departure. Could we get the Albanian visas in so short a time? We wired the consul at Bari that we were on a diplomatic mission, and he was at the train to meet us in a frock coat and a high hat. Tirana is in central Albania, which is Moslem country. The women still wore veils. Even the Christian women wore veils so as not to be conspicuous. The men wore the fez which is forbidden today in Turkey. Their trousers were made as if for riding, but they were of white wool with stripes round about them at a dizzy angle. They had little vests with black tassels down the back as a sign of mourning for their hero Scanderbeg, who stood off the Turks. Tirana was in my day an ox-cart town. Nothing moved rapidly. The only event of the day was when the muezzin (or was it a mahatma or an Ottoman?) called for prayer from the slender minaret.

The American minister and his wife were grand to us. They lived in an old Turkish palace with a huge reception room where they gave dances for the diplomatic corps.

And then we started out to see the countryside. We carried an American flag on our car to gain respect of the hillmen and had an armed bodyguard, a *kavass*, to enforce the respect. In the days before the Italians foreclosed on their mortgage, every Albanian, when dressed for the street, carried two rifles and innumerable knives and pistols in his belt. These brigands were not necessarily malicious but had the habit (to escape from boredom) of shooting at all moving objects, for the same reason that we like to hit the moving ducks in a shooting gallery. Also they had a multiplicity of family feuds. King Zog was carrying on fifty-two feuds, one for every week in the year. The code of these is that you kill off the exact number of men which the other family claims to have sniped from yours. The game is to keep even.

The geographer knows that these feuds are always to be found in partially dissected uplands. The theory is that you and your people have been chosen to occupy a certain valley which is looked upon as the hollow of God's hand, and so you shoot up unfortunates who live in other valleys as a humane gesture of putting them out of their misery. This was the case in the Scottish Highlands, and in the deep Appalachians. At Tryon, North Carolina, I was quite aware as a child that it was unsafe to stand between a group of Durhams and a group of Baabs on Saturday night.

The *kavass*, armed to the teeth, used to follow me at about one hundred feet distance as I walked. But he seemed a long way back of me. One day I said, "What good will you do if a man shoots me?"

"But, monsieur, I will shoot the man that shoots you."

"That's quite all right," I assured him, for by Albanian code the Peatties would as a clan then be even.

We three men went up to the town where Scanderbeg

made his great defense. It lay at the top of a mountain cone against a blanched limestone cliff and had a fine view. We sat on the terrace of an inn. There were many tables, but we had the place to ourselves. The *kavass* sat off at another table. Gradually the other tables began to be filled by as jolly a bunch of cutthroats as I ever saw. And each had a rifle across his knee! One at last spoke to the *kavass*, and at his reply I could see them all relax. So I strolled over to the *kavass*, gave him a cigarette and inquired what he had been asked.

"They wanted to know if you were Italians, but I said you were Americans and they said, 'Oh!'"

When we got back to Naples the girls hadn't missed us.

Livingstone went to Africa. So did Stanley and Olive Schreiner and Isak Dinesen. Why shouldn't we? Tunis, Carthage, Sfax and Kairouan, this last looking like a scene from the Arabian Nights. I visited a university there. I saw no students and asked about it. "Oh, we have a student." They opened a closet door, and there on a high shelf sat a bearded man reciting the Koran. So different from my old college days. Kairouan has a fine crenelated wall and excellent cafés. We hired a whole café one night to see a cobra dance. We were entertained by an American artist who, living in the midst of Oriental squalor and hubbub, had beautiful and sophisticated quarters. Gabès is a true Saharan oasis and lies at the end of a day's journey on a narrow-gauge railway. Matmata, a half-day farther by auto, is a city of troglodytes. Gabès was our headquarters. The oasis is beautiful. The fronds of the date palms allow weird patches of sunlight to fall on the grain and vegetable gardens and along the mud lanes.

There we met Biyou, a handsome young Frenchman gassed in the war. He had been a movie actor and now was doing wood blocks. His family had moved down with him

for his health. The family consisted of his father, a retired army commandant—a gentleman of ancient grandeur and yellow teeth—his mother who had been an opera singer, and a half-wit sister who would always huddle in a corner. They lived in near poverty in an adobe house. We would have dinner there. The commandant would play on a rickety piano that had lost many of its ivories. Madame would wrap a red tablecloth about herself and do Carmen. Then we would walk home under the desert stars and hear the dry date fronds clashing against one another in the night wind. Once there was a dust storm, and the noise in the palm groves was like a battle of swords. And may I say the dust was unbelievable! It darkened the sky, and it got into the tea and into the pockets of clothes shut up in the closet.

I was having to return to my mountains now that the spring snows would be gone. Margaret decided to hie farther away from civilization and live with the Arabs. This involved eating *couscous*, which did not appeal to me. *Couscous* is a gravy lamb stew, highly seasoned, in a ring of barley meal. You all sit cross-legged around the central plate and dip into the gravy with your fingers. If you catch a particularly nice hunk you stick it into your neighbor's mouth and he, shall I say, retaliates.

The best way to achieve entrée into high-class desert society is to know a thief of distinction. Thievery in deserts has standing. A young man is not acceptable to a girl until he is a good provider, if you know what I mean. For a time in the war I was with French colonials: Berbers, Senegalese and what have you? They stole everything they could lay their hands on. The only way we could keep a balance of possessions was to steal back.

Biyou introduced us to Tijany, a rug thief. There is no higher Saharan caste than the rug thieves. Tijany's great

feat was to steal a rug from the Cadi and sell it back to him the same day, the old man going home with the belief that he had two perfectly matched rugs. Biyou had a recess in his wall covered with a rug hanging. One day he discovered some hundred rugs in the recess. He said nothing but noted that one by one they disappeared. One rug was left as rent for the space by Tijany, for it was he who had hidden his loot in the house which he knew to be above suspicion. Finally Tijany got hard up and stole back his gift rug.

Margaret went to Djerba, an island off the east coast of Tunisia. Here it was that Ulysses drew up his battered fleet. Dido's ships are said to have rested at the island on the way to found Carthage. More certain is it that the Phoenicians there built great caravansaries. The Romans and the Turks were followed by the Spaniards. Arabs and Turks fell upon the Spanish garrison, and of their eighteen thousand skulls built a neat-appearing lookout tower. It had since fallen—which Tijany said was unfortunate because it had been so *chic*. Then came the invasion by Margaret. I was not afraid for her safety since an Arab had said to me, "Do not worry about Madame. We Arabs are not interested in women weighing less than two hundred in their stocking feet."

Tijany saw to it that she met the best people. She dined in Arab homes with the men, while the women looked on through the lattice. She went into the harems. She attended all the elaborate ritual of a wedding. She saw the devil-dance before the bridegroom's house and she helped prepare the bridal chamber. Late at night the bride came across the desert on a camel, signaling with faint halloo. For weeks the bride had been sitting in darkness and using mud baths to bleach herself, and had been stuffing herself with barley sent her by the man so that she might be as

obese as possible. The bridegroom broke an egg on the lintel of the door of the bridal chamber to insure fertility. The bride was swathed in clothes. As the groom unwound her he threw the clothes out the door while the wedding guests cheered. In the morning the man shot off a blunderbuss and his friends took him to the steam baths.

And Margaret attended a woman's party. When a woman feels poor she gives a party. Everybody attending leaves a coin in a dish and has her name written down in a book and, opposite, the amount given. Then any guest can give a party and expect the same amount back. This is lifting one's self by the bootstraps. Now I have many times seen the Arab *danse du ventre* but Margaret says there was a tall Senegalese at this party whose dancing put all others in the shade.

Let me quote from an article Margaret wrote upon Djerba:

"Low-lying in the sea, floating on the water—Djerba. Rounded domes between the palm trees, and all around them in a circle, moving, breathing, the sea. The white sun sets up cubes of light with rhomboids stretching backward, planes moving rhythmically to a climax in the thin sharp note of the minaret. Dust in the street, dust on the palm trees, dust in the burnoose of the beggar lying—a heap of crumbling rags—against the wall. Quick, sharp steps: a man in a sky-blue vest, white cloak tossed back across his shoulder, one bright red rose above the ear. White, wraithlike women pass on bare feet, whispering behind white veils. And in the *souks* the Jews squat bargaining, for fourteen centuries a part of Djerba, living separate in their village. And there against the wall the Maltese sailor moves his shuttle back and forth within the mesh of fish nets. Maltese, Berber, Jewish merchant, and in and out among them Negroes, great men with flattened faces,



less black than purple, whose women walk out boldly with their faces naked as their glittering eyeballs."

And then Margaret goes on:

"Night. Stiff, black pin-pricked curtain continuing to nothingness and at the bottom houses bleached with moon-lime, chalked in star-dust. Rounded domes of mosques like frog-blown bubbles in pale, cold scallops on the sky. Traced with a finger in the dust, a groove between two walls, and there a door. A snake parting the dust with its undulating belly. Feet moving softly, and a thin figure at the door.

"Salaam, open! A friend waits."

It would not be fair to my literary style to give any more of Margaret's stuff. Anyway, one day while climbing a mountain I was seized by an obsession—I wanted to see Margaret. There was nothing left for me to do but to telegraph her to come to Europe quickly because the children seemed to be coming down with leprosy.

## XX

### OUR GREAT MARITAL CRISIS

A FEW years later we had gone to Europe once again to see the round of the seasons. In the interim Michael Ransome had been born, with the blessing of the gracious Virgin of Brittany. Mike was left with his grandmother Peattie. We went abroad again so soon because I had not seen the eastern Alps and I felt the need to review German writings upon mountains before I published. Also I was anxious to attend an international congress of geographers in Paris. This time the children were placed in Swiss schools, high above the winter clouds and upon inspiring alp lands. I began my mountain climbing in Graubünden in eastern Switzerland with the city of Chur as headquarters. Chur was our first Teutonic experience, though the language of the people there is really Romansch, a mountain derivation of the Latin. Nevertheless the life of the people is distinctly German. The town has wonderful arcades supported by massive pillars. The window shutters on the houses are gaily decorated and there is much fine, deep-toned singing in the *Bierstuben*. Once a week a wheezy band played in the cobblestoned square.

Graubünden is a canton of high alp lands in a massive mountain group. I climbed with enthusiasm, being delighted to be back in the heights. But one day I had an accident, of no importance at the time. Mountain climbers

should get hurt only in some moment of daring. I hurt my leg because I was butted by a goat. I met a Romansch boy walking with a billy goat. The goat did not like me and struck me on the side of the leg. He tried it a second time, but I took him by the horns and threw him down the alp. Then I walked ten miles home, thinking nothing more of it. Actually the goat had killed an area of nerve, all of which was responsible for, first, my becoming grumpy to my wife and, secondly, my writing a book while sitting in the cafés of Dalmatia.

We left Chur one Sunday by a train that skirted Liechtenstein, that comic opera principality which lies between Switzerland and Austria. It occurred to us to stop and visit the single town and national capital Vaduz. On the way in we were surprised to find the highway crowded with visitors. Busses and carts, and people on bicycles, on horseback and on foot. There was no one but ourselves when we visited the castle, but when we descended we found the village crowded. The first inn at which we sought refreshment was completely full. At the next we had room made for us at a large table. I ordered tea. No, we must not drink tea today but *Sauser*, for this is the day when all who could came to Vaduz to drink the first pressing of the grape. Such was *Sauser*; it looked like strawberry soda and had a kick like a mule. Margaret insists that going home in the bus I led all in singing "*Das gibt nur einmal.*"

Innsbruck is a grand town. The mountains tower above the town and seem to be, indeed, at the very end of the street. But the best in Innsbruck was the Gasthof Goldener Adler. It was an historic old inn and on each bedroom door were listed the important personages who had slept there. I had Goethe's bed. Margaret had his wife's, or was it that of his wife? The dining halls were Tirolese style, sealed in

panels, and there were mountain people who entertained with song and zither. We learned to join in when *Die Rosen Blühen* was offered. But our goal was Heidelberg. I went on and struggled with the German language for a time alone. You cannot read German and talk German all day without spontaneous combustion. So I used to shut myself in my room and talk English to myself.

Always when Margaret has been away I plan some surprise for her home-coming. This time I composed my first and last book of poetry. I planned it to be published posthumously, if then. It was about the children and was called *Mother, My Toes Are Cold* and was presented to Margaret on her arrival.

Having adequately conquered one of the arts, I decided to take up painting. It was this way. There was in Heidelberg a very handsome doctor. Margaret was not well, and this doctor would sit by her bedside, look deep into her eyes, and, holding her hand, say, "My dear young lady, tell me all about your life, your inner thoughts and frustrations, and maybe I can help you." I will not say that he was unethical, but merely that I looked upon him as a snake in the grass. First I tried to attract Margaret's attention by presenting her with a whole series of earrings. No good! So I developed a flirtation with a nun. Schwester Eulagie was nursing Margaret. She would giggle and dance about and sit on the couch and pat my hand. But this also did no good, for, though in my way I loved Schwester Eulagie, she was well past sixty. So I took to art. Margaret had a passion for art and herself was painting Europe as she went. I now produced a picture a day. They must have been good art, for they turned Margaret's attention from the doctor with the intense gaze. When I got home I was invited to exhibit in the Ohio State Agricultural Fair, but it wasn't until some time later that I discovered that

they had mistaken my blue-grey mass of mountain for a recumbent Poland-China hog. I own at present the largest collection of early Peatties in the United States.

Heidelberg as a town was picturesque, covered with soft winter snow. The university is the oldest in Germany and the home of deep-rooted traditions. Even today dueling is made honorable by much stiff formality. I went to one of the corps initiations. The ritual was very formal. Every one sat quite erect and the officers, dressed in baldrics, would announce the stages of procedure by slapping their swords on the bare tables. After the new members had been inducted the fun began. There was beer *ad lib*. If you did not drink fast enough the waiter piled steins before you.

It was apparently code that each member present should salute the guest during the course of the evening. This was done by rising and thrusting a stein in my direction. I rose and replied. Then we drank, and I soon learned that I must drink as long as he who did me honor. The evening got well along. I had been toasted too many times. One fat boy with large capacity watched until we both had before us full steins. German steins are not small. He saluted me. I replied. Then he went for the bottom of his stein. Know ye, fellow countrymen, that for the honor of America and *deutsch-amerikanische Bräderschaft* I stayed with him to the end. We finished full-neck to neck.

Two friends stood out for me as the opposites among the German people. The leader of the geographical seminar at the university graciously gave me a tea. A German tea is something. The table in the dining room is formally set, and there are place cards. Tea and wine are served, and there are delicious cakes and sandwiches and the inevitable sausage. I was honored especially in that the dean

of German geographers was invited. This was Herr Hettner. He was a beautiful character and had violet eyes. He was elderly and a cripple. As I saw him later in his own study he was to me the height of scholarship. One felt awed in his presence and yet loved him for the friendship that he offered. It has been reported since that the gentle, learned old man has been refused permission by the authorities to revise his great book because it treats of environmentalism. Environmentalism does not support the theory of racial superiority. The shortsighted Nazis do not realize that here is one of the great men of their race.

In contrast to Herr Hettner there was my friend, the owner of the pension. He had been first lieutenant of the old Heidelberg Regiment. He had lost a leg in action and walked with a wooden limb. He used to say, "I like war. I like a little trouble." When I went in the evening to the Café Wagner to hear some music no one noticed me; but let me enter with the *Herr Oberleutnant*, and the waiters came to attention, and we had the best seats in the place. In Germany warriors outrank scholars.

The university library was excellent, but I transferred my attentions to the University of Munich because of the art and music that Munich afforded. How intellectually the Germans approach music! The halls would be kept ablaze during the concert so that people could follow the scores note by note. The light seemed harsh and disturbing to an American used to subdued lights. It was as if the emotional was sacrificed to the intellectual. But at the opera, between acts, there was a great deal of extraordinary eating at the booths in the foyer. I took note of some facts. Mozart sold a huge number of boiled eggs, while after a round of Wagner absolutely everybody went in for bananas. A great nation!

I was accepted into the local geographical society. Its

meetings were highly intellectual and with no unnecessary formality, and beer was always served afterward. How different these meetings were from those of the Royal Geographical Society in London! Working in the Royal Society library I was called regularly to the main hall for afternoon tea. And the evening meetings were always dress affairs. The Right Honorable So-and-so would preside, and the ex-Governor of Nigeria and the High Commissioner of Some Part of India would read papers. The Empire must be preserved. The Germans were much nearer our concept of plain folks. And their hospitality was close to American informality. We would reply to their graciousness by giving teas in the hotel. This trip was in 1932. The previous journey had been before the panic, when we had a little money and the exchange was greatly in our favor. Now we felt poor and barely scraped along. But to the Germans we seemed rich. It was depressing to see people of high intellectual quality with such meager incomes. They, like all Germans, were looking for a way out, some new regime.

That new regime was at the moment being planned in the Brown House but a few blocks away from our hotel. We read in certain papers about Hitler. I was told that I might see him at work by paying a mark and might shake his hand for several marks, but it did not appeal to me as a way to spend money. Hitler was then an absurdity to me. It was Hindenburg who seemed loved by the people. When my American friend Carl Wittke gave the George Washington memorial address in the great hall at Heidelberg, he said, "And you Germans have a man who is first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of your countrymen, General von Hindenburg," and the audience rose to its feet with a shout.

It was at this time that Hitler published some twenty points for the nation's reconstruction. One was that de-

partment stores be abolished. It hardly seemed serious to me. Later he declared that he was out to save German womanhood, but he didn't say from whom. I had the impression that German womanhood was pretty well taking care of itself. When I left Germany I shared with colleagues, both of whom spoke German fluently and had access to people high in Berlin, the opinion that Hitler would never see the capital. So much for my political astuteness.

By chance we turned up in Yugoslavia. One morning after a cold trip in a bus, begun before dawn, we arrived in the village of Maria Bistrica. A few houses showed the breakfast smoke coming from the eaves, for most of the houses were without chimneys. Only a Tolstoy could do justice to the straggling village. It was winter, and we were frozen. We went to the inn to find that the windows had been left open all night to let out the stale air of the evening before. I awoke a maidservant and presented my problem. While she was making a fire she gave us a terrible liqueur made of gentians. Then she laid my wife on the tile stove and lit the fire under her. As Margaret began to warp a bit with the heat we removed her.

Now the cold of Yugoslavian interiors did two things to us. It made my leg, the one the goat had selected for punishment, pain badly. It also froze Margaret's warm nature. We began to find fault with each other. We got to Sušak on the Adriatic and still found fault with each other. Remember that we had not a word of Slavic and could not talk at all except between ourselves. Then we went down the Adriatic to Korčula and Dubrovnik. Our little post boat was caught in a fierce storm. I am a better sailor than Margaret, but this time I was ill and she was not. This did not prove in any way my masculine superiority. My leg got so bad that I took to staying in hotels, writing the aforesaid children's book, while Margaret went sight-seeing in the rain. You could see that we were drifting



apart. But the crucial time arrived over a chessboard. In each country we had kept an account of our victories over each other. I easily won the German championship from Margaret because after all chess is a man's game. But she improved her attack and, hands down, took the Yugoslavian tournament. And then she said a fatal thing: "I thought this was a man's game." No wife should make such a remark.

When we got to Venice it poured rain. It was still raining in Genoa. At Genoa we got into a weird, rather decayed hotel. Our bedroom was so large that it could easily have held six tons of hay. And the bed must have been made for a royal family. I have never seen such expanse of sleeping accommodation. There were pillows and pillows. Thus propped up we began to quarrel. It started over a little matter of imperialism, the question of the Boer War. I was for the development of resources by the English while Margaret was for the rights of minorities. The war led naturally enough into the question of child discipline. Margaret thought girls needed a more severe hand while I was for gentleness to girls but distinct obedience from boys. And then I worked around to my hurt feelings about her slighting remark concerning my ability as a chess player. That was too much. We broke out laughing, both of us, and when we awoke the clouds had cleared and the sun was out.

By suppertime the next day the crisis was over because we were in my brother Donald's home in Menton, and he and his wife Louise Redfield were actually talking to us in English—most interesting English.

Donald after graduation from Harvard had been employed in a government bureau in Washington that had to do with experimentation with foreign plants. It was interesting work, but both Donald and Louise had ambitions to write. They did a courageous thing—broke all ties with a monthly pay check and started to write. The French

franc at that time was low, and so they made their home on the Riviera and simply wrote. Both of them produced novels. Both of them had yet to make their names. But somehow they have always managed to surround themselves with rather dramatic beauty. They and their two little boys had found a graceful home in a garden such as only the Riviera can produce. Their American dollars went far. Their cook was from the *Cordon bleu*, and their milkman was a Russian duke who was a refugee but still sent his bills with a ducal coronet at the top. They worked all day, and, afternoons, we all would go down to the town to relax in those delightful seaside cafés. The climate was now warm, friendship was warm, and life began to take on normal aspects. Our marriage and future happiness was definitely saved for all time.

The high point of our journey and the last of Europe for us came on a mountain side. Donald and Louise are epicures of food as well as connoisseurs in many other matters. There is a little inn called *La Ferme d'Ubac Foron* (which means, "the farm on the shady side of the Foron valley"). There lives a Czech who can cook and who knows the proper wine for each course. We drove in a fiacre to the farm, ordered our meal, and strolled about the mountain side while it was being cooked. Then came one of those occasions when friendship is cemented without a spoken pledge. For hours we sat over our meal, Monsieur and Madame hovering about the table and joining us in Provençal songs. Donald had been reading us the manuscript of his *Sons of a Martian*. In that book appears a dedication. It is inscribed to Margaret, Louise and me in the words:

In remembrance of the wine we four drank and the songs we sang at the mountain farm of Ubac Foron in the Forest of Menton, while the shadows lengthened and the bells rang down from Castillon and Castellar.



At Sušak I was still pondering Margaret's slander on my chess game. Margaret entered Djerba on a camel.



Returning to Westhill from Bavaria.



## XXI

### LIFE AT WESTHILL

BACK at the house on Perry Street one August, on as hot a night as that time in the Nebraska scene when I was born, Michael Ransome came into the world. Almost from the first he laughed. We called him a frost blossom because he came so late in our lives. But this meant the baby-raising stage all over again. We had sold the island tree house, and summer in Columbus is hot. Residents say that winter and summer are not too pleasant and that spring and fall are nice anywhere. Also we were far enough south to get Gulf Coast climate, and early robins looking about for new nest sites sometimes as early as February. The wind from the tropics is very disturbing to a family so badly bitten with wanderlust.

I came home on such a *douce* and restless day to find Margaret staring out of the study window. When Margaret stares I know that (1) we are to start for Timbuctu, or (2) she is going to buy a new hat, or (3) we are about to build a new house.

She said in a far-away voice, "Michael must ride a hay wagon."

I always humor the ladies and so replied, "Very well, dear, we will have a hay ride early next week; but hay is at a premium in February."

"No, I mean that he must go on lots of hay rides. All the children must ride hay wagons."

What she was saying to me was that the children, in order to develop as good and healthy Americans, must get back to the farm scene. Not a bad idea.

How does one go about picking a summer home?

Immediately one's intention is announced, friends write to suggest building right next door to them on Duck Lake—or why not come to the Canadian woods where we can all eat together in the jolliest little clubhouse? But that was not what we wanted. We wanted a farm among farmers—and we got it. Of course, for good farming country we might have picked Dane County, Wisconsin, or almost any county in Iowa. But the more romantic farm scenes are found in New England, especially in the north-south strip that includes the Berkshire Hills and the higher Green Mountains. This strip running from the Sound to Canada holds more rustic joy, more bucolic pleasure than any equivalent strip in the world.

Now one can't rummage about old farms in New England in February; and yet the need for a farm seemed to the Peatties to be immediate. Being a geographer, I can read much from a topographic map. By studying the contours and the stream courses, by interpreting grade and slope one can almost picture the landscape. By noticing the size of a village and the number of roads and houses one can almost tell what people will have for breakfast. So over these maps I pored: Here was an upland valley reached by a gorge that seemed ideal; here was undoubtedly a fine farm but it was too near the railway. I picked out a half-dozen regions where I knew we might be content, and addressed letters to the nearest chambers of commerce asking that they acquaint their real-estate men with the exact, inexpensive but somewhat odd requirements enumerated.

Of course, I got a stack of mail. Every one had a mansion

or a chicken coop that was suited to my temperament to a T. I really didn't read the stuff but threw it away. I don't like to read great piles of mail. (Bismarck, you know, said that, if you don't read a letter for two weeks, why, then you don't need to read it. There is no letter so urgent that it does not become even more urgent if you lay it aside for a time. I have even opened bills, marked them "Opened by mistake," and put them back into the post.) Then along came a single letter. My mind can comprehend one letter at a time. It reported that in the town of Wallingford (a town in New England is a territory, not a settlement) there was to be found exactly what we wished. It was in unspoiled Vermont, which state was anxious to have as many people as possible come to help spoil it. Margaret went on to see the place in March before the mountain snow had entirely disappeared. Her car got stuck twice in the mud trying to overcome the advertised seclusion of our intended home. The place had a colonial oven and six hundred cords of stacked wood. The Peatties had never owned six hundred cords of wood—too much wood. So she rummaged around and bought another place.

We planned a farm that was on a running brook and had a view of the sunset. We bought a hillside without a stream, and it faced east. The house had been abandoned for five years, with windows broken and a basement wall tumbled in. There was no oven nor even a fireplace. But the house was a century old, in sound condition and with good lines. It was one of those New England affairs where the sheds connecting with the house stretch out *ad lib.* The marble slabs that framed the old fireplace were found in the basement, and there was plenty of fissile rock and field stone for the making of a grand restoration. The children could walk into it without bending the head. Then a partition was knocked out and a large living room

created. The design of the milliner's window in the village was copied so as to give us a view. We call it the mountain window.

In three weeks Margaret had the house all planned and saw the construction started. She pinned samples of wallpaper on the walls so that there could be no error. She drew lines on the walls where the doors were to be cut through. And she stood directly by the workmen to be sure that the fireplace had the right proportions. The local labor could be trusted. They had a natural talent for the fitness of things and liked Margaret because she was so sure how she wanted things done. Then she came home to Michael and the family. Six weeks later, leaving Margaret and the tot to come later by train, I was en route in one of those old square Chevies, two children in the front seat, and half the stuff one usually has in an attic on the back seat.

West Hill where the farm lay was no mean climb. The last five miles out of the village were dirt road. The tired old car chugged up the incline reluctantly, but the driver was exultant. Possession of a farm somehow satisfied a longing as a city home had not. Here was land, our land, with springs, meadows, pastures and woods, one hundred acres of them. It seemed as if those last five miles would never be achieved. Then we came upon the place. We jumped from the car and scattered about, exploring. I went to the village for supplies, and when I returned could not find the children until I heard shouts from the hay barn up the hill. That night we slept on the floor.

The next morning I was up at dawn. Our land ran to the top of a small mountain. I climbed up through the hayfields, wet with dew, up through the pasture to the sugar bush and the spruce forest. From there the mountains could be seen swinging half around the horizon, and below was



the green valley with its patchwork fields. I shouted to greet the rising sun, and I laughed out loud until the heifers came to stare at me with sad and wondering eyes. It seemed as if I had never been so happy. This land was ours, to have and to hold. I knew then that I was going to love the place with fervent intensity. Some time in your life you ought to buy a hill farm, and then you will understand what I mean. I leaped and shouted as I came down the hill. I have forgotten whether we had breakfast. Though the buildings were far from finished, for we worked on them all summer, I sent a wire to Margaret: "The farm is beyond highest expectations. I am crazy. Come immediately and bring Michael." The operator had never sent a telegram like that before. He said, "Are you sure this is what you want to send?"

New England has a finished look—there is nothing raw or new about it. It and its people and its stone walls have been there for a long time now. Its landscape has mellowed. It has a combination of old-world occupation and new-world freshness. Its byways are not cut through hills in a straight line but fit the landscape. Houses are placed where they ought to be and not in unnatural and arbitrary sites. The scene gives one a sense of permanency, and here we decided to establish ourselves unto the third and fourth generation. We would not try to change the scene but fit ourselves into it. I began planting trees for my grandchildren to enjoy. We had come to stay.

We called the farm Westhill. Westhill came to mean something different to each of us. For Michael the first year meant freshness of sunlight and butterflies. Later it meant a swing. Then it came to mean rides on hay wagons and friendship with farm dogs. Finally Michael became the farmer of the family, to bring down the cows and so be late to dinner, to hang about the barns and to drive

the horses. The pursuit of agriculture was no affectation with him. He was one year old when he first came to West-hill, and so he was farm-bred. When I am at work on construction, Michael is always there. When I go through the fields for milk, Michael is behind me. When I come down the mountain path trying to yodel, Michael is with me giving a high-pitched imitation.

Anne got something entirely different from the farm. She went out to discover the secret places. She claimed as hers the maple grove high on the mountain and the spruce woods still higher. She would never let me cut even a path through the spruce. She alone knew where the deer slept in the heat of the day. Anne and I built a hut in a fallow field. It was a secret hut, and visitors were not shown where it was. She would sleep up there, sometimes cook on a little stove, or answer the farm bell for lunch with leaves and twigs in her hair and a far-away look in her eyes. I felt sometimes as if she were more conscious of the farm animals, domestic and wild, than of the people. She told me how once when among the heifers she lay down to see what they would do. They came to look her over, one licked her bare leg, another snuffed about, and then they all lay down around her in the sunny field—maidens all. And it was Anne who came to know the neighbors best. It was she they asked for dinner when they had caught a fat woodchuck.

Rod was all for construction. He worked on the house and he made his own quarters. There was a grange loft above the kitchen and woodshed. This under Rod's hammer became the boys' dormitory. All the furniture, cabinets for Victrola records and the shelves for his books were his own construction. At an auction he bought a cottage organ for a dollar and brought it home on top of the car. As he outgrew his carpenter activities he took up

square dancing and became a caller in his own right. Rod is the only one who goes up for winter skiing.

Gentle reader, have you had enough of this experiment in Arcady? You must yet bear with me until I have shown you Margaret in her garden. The first summer Margaret furnished the house with beds and chairs and chests and tables from the barn of every farm within miles. Then I chopped down the old plum orchard that hindered the view from the mountain window. Margaret saw her chance for a garden. It was from the first a wonderful garden, as if the plants knew that they were growing to please Margaret. Bareheaded and barefooted, she would stand among her flowers while her friends the humming birds would fly close to her. Now this, of course, is sentimental writing. I mean it to be. I am perforce a sentimentalist. I cannot write like Hemingway, and I am not going to try. Life may be stark at times, but there is also some poetry to living. And I write as I do now purposely to encourage all sentimentalists to buy a farm on a hill.

Now I am not by nature an intellectual. I like, rather, action and I like construction. I am happy when I am hewing and when I can build. Michael and I chop trees. Only God can make a tree and likewise only He can make a view. We have too many trees—we have to fight Nature or be submerged. The seedlings and the saplings encroach upon our fields and narrow our lanes. With their roots they overturn our stone walls. I chop the large trees, and Michael the little ones. When a two-inch tree falls before his Boy Scout ax he will shout a warning, "Timber-r-r." The house is near the road and there are better views up the hill. So there we built a log cabin of spruce out of our own forest. The cabin is dedicated to meditation and study. It is a retreat on rainy days when the house is too full. It stands in the center of the field, and in season that

field is filled with bobolinks in irregular, darting flight.

The farm has a lot of bedrooms, and the boys' dormitory takes unlimited numbers of cots. We have guests which the little house on Perry Street will not contain. There are two kinds of guests. One sort wants to sit in the house and talk about the Munich Pact or the New Deal. These we do not re-ask. But most of our visitors are of the other kind. They explore our fields and find where the fringed gentians are most numerous. Some beautiful characters will weed the garden. Others help me put new slates on the barn roof. These we ask back. Indeed, so many find their way up our hill that we have printed directions of route. The directions run like this:

"On Route 7 be sure to shun the road that leads to Dorset Center, for that settlement is New York transplanted into the hills. Rather go straight north and so pass through two lesser Dorsets and a Danby. Then you come to South Wallingford which is so small that I have difficulty turning there when I go down for kerosene. At a severe grange hall in the Coolidge tradition turn left up the dug-way. This is second-gear stuff, and the road winds uphill all the way, yes, to the very end. At the fork, if you turn left, you will come to one of those views that only New England knows. Stop there awhile and impress on your mind a scene whose memory will bear you well in dark, winter days in the city. Then turn about, for you should have gone right at the fork. At last you will come to a white farmhouse close beside the road. You can identify it because Michael will be sitting in the yard to give you welcome."

As time went on we began to get the feel of the country. Our original purpose in going back to the soil had been merely to farm a crop of children, children born on western ranges and brought East to fatten. The results were won-

derful. Children riding along the lanes high on hay wagons. Children coming down the hill after dark, coming from feeding the horses. Children swinging with stiff legs pointed skyward through the maple foliage. But then we were also part of the community. Margaret went to church the first Sunday, and one woman said to her, "My dear, you started right." The farmers on the hill, perhaps because we so essentially loved the soil, came to look upon us as neighbors, rather than strangers. And we liked *them*. We liked their downright integrity, we liked their shyness, and we liked their humor. So our Vermont became more than a summer home: it became association with hard-working, frugal people who have weathered snow-bound, bitter winters. I mean people like Mrs. Day, John Shortsleeves, Arden Wideawake, Joe Underwood, old man Fish and a hundred others.

Now these neighbors are not quaint rustics whose philosophies are patent. One does not come to know them easily. One must break through the shell. I remember in a strange village asking a Vermonter for aid in finding a man.

"Do you know Underwood?"

"Yep."

"Do you know where he lives?"

"Yep."

"Do you think he's at home now?"

"Nope."

"Well, where can I find him?"

"Here. I'm Underwood."

This caution and reserve is also shown in the local loathing toward definite assertions. There is the classic story of the farmer who was asked if certain objects far up the mountain side were sheep, and the reply, "Look like sheep from this side." No overstatement, that! I once asked a

neighbor to tell me whether a certain man was trustworthy. I have heard the reply many times since: "Wal, he never done me dirt." High praise, but again no overstatement. The prize example is from a tombstone: "This man apparently led a good life."

I am not writing of the farmers down on National Route 7. They are raw newcomers, having cleared their farms only one hundred and fifty years ago. The true Vermonters, descendants of the Green Mountain Boys, come from the hills. The valleys in the early days were swampy and held miasmic vapors. The old post road through our region runs faintly through the woods on the very tops of the hills. You can tell where the tollgate was by the initials carved there on a tree. Our hill farmhouses are simple affairs—none of this imported Connecticut stuff. Our spinning wheels are indigenous. The last for the baby's shoe that I found in the dirt was an essential part of the culture of our farm. We still have the old windlass in the woodshed for lifting up the hogs to butcher them.

About us are a lot of other relics of the past. Take, for example, the language. "Don't use that timber, it's dusy." That is to say, it's rotten. I tried to get a summer visitor to call her home Dusy Wood—it sounded so well—but she discovered my deception in time. On West Hill we don't make hay in lowery weather. Indeed, we stop loading hay and dash for the barn when it puckers up to rain. The women have a polite language all their own. A woman does not walk on legs, but on lower limbs. She does not wear clothes, but garments. She never goes to bed—only men would be so crass. Ladies retire. Well, it's pleasant living on a farm; there are so many bites, that is, apples and berries and the like.

The hill humor has always been my delight. It is never light and subtle but dry and quick. Not a little of it, of

course, is poked at the summer people. How the natives laughed when one of my children brought down the cattle in the evening, drove them through the gate, closed the gate and then climbed over it! I was setting fence posts with Herb—that is, I was holding the clean ash posts while Herb beat the high top with an eighteen-pound maul. Between his grunts Herb kept up a slow dribble of conversation, though the task of driving the posts in the ground would have winded most men. Herb went on: "Jim over Tinmouth way was holding a post, put his hand on top. . . . Alec came down on it with the maul and smashed it. . . . Alec said, 'Excuse me.'"

They tell the story of a very, very large woman who was married to a quite small man. The woman was shaking a sheet out of the window and a neighbor passing by called up, "What's ye doing, Sally, lookin' for Henry?"

We were sitting in Wideawake's blacksmith shop one rainy day, watching the foreign cars splash through the rain bound for a week end in the north. All day, distributed about on nail kegs (pronounced "kags"), we had been searching for an opening to "get it on" the other man. We fenced and we feinted but no one left an opening, until discussing child discipline one man said, "Wal, the only time I was ever *really* whipped was for telling the truth." His guard was down, and immediately came the thrust, "Arden, it sure cured you." Blood had been drawn. The day had been worth while. The meeting was over.

Once at this same smithy forum I asked the group what they thought about Coolidge, who at the time was living but twenty-eight miles away. Wonder at my stupidity was in the tone of the answer, "Why, he was born in Vermont." Chuckling over this reasoning, I went to the post office. I told the story to the postmaster. Still in wonder, he said, "But he *was* born in Vermont." Two Vermonters can't

be wrong. This loyalty to this greenest of states is typified by the story of old man Griffith. Griffith went to California, and he died. Let this be a lesson to all, to know when they are well off.

Now all Vermonters are not honest people. There is one type of whom I cannot speak badly enough. This is the man who does not fix his fences. Once having sunk to that iniquity, man has embarked upon a career which includes most of the vices of civilization. But, generally speaking, Vermont lacks the irascibility and bad temper which characterizes many farming communities. My theory is that bad temper among farmers is often the result of a touch of sun. The summer heat of Vermont is seldom scorching. Be that as it may, Vermonters have won my love with their pleasant, kindly natures. Individuals by nature, they are co-operative in the face of disaster. Thus they all gave money when Joe lost his arm in the sawmill. The day after the hurricane every one turned out to make the roads passable, except one man who stayed at home and phoned the road commissioner for help. He was a man who never fixed his fences.

There are some people like the Wolfs who are always wanting to get the law on you. But they are "naturals," a family that has run down mentally for the last three generations. In general, these men of the hills are obviously to be trusted. I have made agreements to have woodland cleared, trees planted, sugar made, land plowed—all in my absence—and never a written contract. Life is competitive until one is down and out, and then comes the human social instinct. The person in ill luck suddenly has virtues not previously mentioned. One beautiful but sad afternoon the neighbors filled the severe little church at the bottom of the hill to attend the funeral of a man who had been kicked by



a horse. As we left, one man turned to me with tears in his eyes and said, "If you bought a cord of wood off of John, he always gave you a cord and a quarter." Praise doesn't come higher than that.

Speaking of transactions, not much money changes hands up our way. Farm hands—strange men who wander about, homeless—are glad to work for merely tobacco and "found." I signed a note for Bullock so that he could buy a hayrake. The next day he paid his blacksmith bill. I had thought him without cash. "Oh, I paid it in pears and potatoes," he said. When Joe married he rented a farm; but he had no cattle, and therefore no cash income. He worked for me some, and I was worried about his winter economics. But he was not. Joe had married a good farm wife. He took me to the cellar, and there row upon row of glass jars were filled with cooked vegetables and fruits, both wild and cultivated. He had two hogs that he would slaughter before Christmas. Subsistence farming. The next spring he wrote me that his grocery bill during the winter had been but eight dollars, and that was largely for kerosene.

When money is spent it is spent reluctantly and almost shyly. I remember Jim Needham coming up to buy hay from me as was his seasonal custom. Jim drove up in his ancient buckboard. Now, I knew why he was calling on me, and Jim knew that I knew. We know all our neighbors' actions and, indeed, even their intents. Well, Jim lighted up and we sat on the bench outside the kitchen door and whittled, carefully and thoughtfully. We talked of Cecil's new bull, about the market for Christmas trees and the progress of fern picking up Mount Tabor way—ferns for the New York florists. Finally Jim looked up the slope to the hayfields.

"Your hay ain't so good this year."

"Jim, that's the best hay on the hill. This is good hay land."

Immediately we dropped the subject. This had been a daring, almost too direct, approach. It was some time before we got back to the subject of hay. After an hour, and a pleasant one at that, Jim went down the hill with an oral agreement for ten dollars' worth of hay.

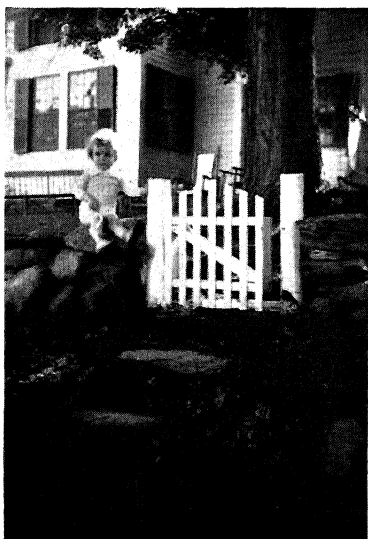
One thing about the hill we have never learned is how news travels so rapidly. I guessed, of course, that it was our party system of telephones. Not a little news does indeed get about that way. If I hear someone call Newton on the phone I know without further listening that he is selling cattle. Probably a little short of money. Grocery bill hasn't been paid yet, I happen to know.

But finally I found out that most news is transferred man to man at the milk-loading platform where every farm has a representative lolling about until the creamery truck comes through. Not a few choose to receive their mail at the post office rather than by rural delivery because—well, the general store is a pretty good place to get the low-down. But also these people are trained to see changes in the landscape due to nature or human activity. Let me fix the fence high up the hill where the meadow land meets the pasture, and it is quickly observed and becomes a subject of neighborhood comment. Even the children note the quality of the corn, the repaired fence, the addition of a heifer to the herd. Should I comment on some activity of mine the day before the reply will be, "Yes, I seed you did."

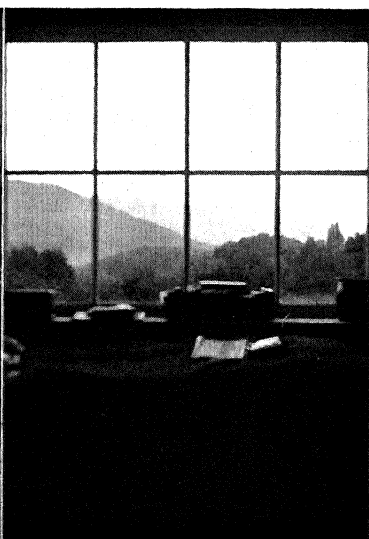
So we decided to work ourselves and our history into Vermont soil and into the hearts of the people. We wanted to belong. We, indeed, planted trees that only our children shall see matured. And I still climb up to the sugar bush, look out over my valley, and laugh aloud. The old ro-



The center of the house was the fireplace.



You could tell the house, for Michael would be at the front gate to welcome you.



The mountain window we rate a chief joy.



mantic road of my youth is today too crowded with motor cars. There are few fields left to explore. Romantic frontiers are now commonplaces. And, alas, over too many lanes there are rumbling caissons and cannon. But our hillside is still inviolate. You can have your fame and your successes, your mansions and your country clubs, but we have our house in the shade of two great maples and a tamarack, and the house has a window that looks to a far-away valley between Dorset and Tabor mountains. Dorset, come evening, casts a shadow on Tabor. When that shadow reaches the summit of Tabor it is time to light the fat kerosene lamps in the living room. Then I go out alone into the yard to look up at the stars through the foliage and to watch the yellow from the windows. Life at Westhill brings such contentment that I am frightened lest some catastrophe take it from me.

## XXII

### DEATH AT WESTHILL

THERE was but one of the four grandparents who had lived to know of the happiness at Westhill. This grandparent was my mother, whom the children called Nana. There was, indeed, one bedroom known as Nana's room. Mother loved the fact that it had once been Lucinda Edgerton's weaving room. Lucinda had been a character of importance, as was her brother who was called Dididity Edgerton because he stuttered. Lucinda's importance is recorded for all time since the neighbors always will call an old orchard we own "The Widow Edgerton's Dower."

Some people after seventy years of age decline in personality and become colorless and wraithlike. Not so Nana. She was a large woman and stood very erect. There was always something noble about her walk and the way that she threw a scarf about her neck with the air of the grand lady. The simplest of the neighbor women coming to "set and make a visit" was received like a duchess. The people on the hill always spoke of Nana as Madam Peattie, and I heard indirectly that it was "the old woman's money" that kept me going. No one could believe that so grand a manner came from anything but affluence.

Margaret was so busy about the things that made her happiest—the children, her garden, and the avid exploration of the byways—that housekeeping seemed but an interfer-

ence. Except that Sunday afternoons I must take Nana for a rather formal drive, she was happy about the house. Margaret turned over the management of the place to her. In the end, I believe, Nana really thought of the house as hers. She would say, "I have invited up a number of people for this summer." She made pillows for every possible place a pillow could be. In Lucinda's weaving room she hooked rugs for the floors. And it was she who picked flowers to put in the Bennington jug that always stands by the mountain window. She loved to spruce up the place, and she kept us up to standard. But never was the house more worked over than just before my brother Edward and his wife would come to visit. For this first-born everything must be right. Edward is a large man, and Mother insisted that I buy a special chair for him. I don't know why first-borns always must have roast beef, but they do.

In summer we would get a bit lax on conventions. But when Nana arrived everything came up to a high level of respectability. She would not let the children come to the table naked to the waist. I always liked their browned bodies, but Nana sent them away for shirts. When Rod, about to go to college, started to eat his mashed potatoes with a spoon, Nana rose majestically and pointed a severe finger at him and said sternly, "Roderick Elia Peattie, you who are going to Harvard, *put down that spoon.*" Rod might have argued the point with us, but not with Nana.

And yet it was Nana who always gave extra gaiety to the day. Put a Strauss waltz on the machine, and Nana would dance about, waving her scarf. Start a project, such as scraping a table of its old paint, and Nana would be there working. Let the workshop get mussy, and Nana would clean it up. She was very proud of our car, for she had never owned one. On dirt roads it is difficult to keep the car clean. Nana would hose the car and wash it down,

I think partly in an effort to shame me to diligence. One time the plumber drove up in a car which was the same model as ours. Nana thought it our car, and it was very dirty. When the plumber came to go home he could not believe his new splendor. To keep up with Nana's passion for improvement in the details of life, every year we did something to her room. One year we enlarged it by knocking down a partition; another, we put in bookshelves.

One of the most delightful things about Nana was the manner in which she took the center of the stage. At meals she would direct the conversation to some worthy subject. Our table was never dull when she was there. And in the evenings, when there was an open fire and a soft glow of lamps, Nana would tell tales. They were tales of a vivid life, and they were tales that Michael and our oldest visitor would equally enjoy. She also read books aloud. She loved to tell how she went to the village library to get a copy of *David Copperfield* and the severe attendant looked at her over her glasses and said, "By Dickens?" One never vegetated when Nana came to visit.

Michael lived for Nana, and Nana for Michael. There was no bird's nest which Michael had discovered that was too far for Nana. If Michael wanted to show how high he could swing, Nana would drop her work to go out to watch him. The children had a verse about her:

Every summer Nana comes,  
She is the greatest fun.  
She always says that life is  
A joke that's just begun.

Whenever I have been afield  
And picked a pretty flower,  
I take it to my Nana's room  
When she has story hour.



She is so very funny when  
She plays that she's a bear;  
But, oh, how clean you have to be,  
At lunch when Nana's there!

One spring Nana seemed too ill and too tired with old age to travel. She was nearing the end. She realized this. Now Nana was a sort of old Indian fighter, the kind that puts up a last grand struggle and then dies with boots on. So she started out alone from North Carolina for Vermont by train. She was determined to have one last romp with Michael. At Albany she found further progress stopped by floods which had washed out the tracks. Rod went down for her in the car and the two fought their way back over submerged mountain roads. For five days she was the same old Nana, gay and almost dancing. How the children laughed with her! Then one morning she got up to dress, sighed, and died with her head in Anne's lap. Nana's time had come. Never again would she go a-gypsying with us on picnics, and never again would we hear her grand tales by the fireside in the evenings. But we didn't feel sorry for Nana. She had never wasted a moment of life. She had lived vividly and then just stopped living. It wasn't a sad death, it was a grand way to die.

A formal funeral for Nana was unthinkable. None of us would have suggested anything so out of key, and formality would have horrified the children. Nana's death in her old age was to them like the fall of leaves and the sleep that comes with winter. So our last rites for Nana were an imitation of her life. We placed the simple casket before the mountain window where the sunlight could stream in upon her. Before it we laid a hooked rug of autumn leaves design which she had made. On the casket we laid flowers she had picked the day before in the garden. Anne added

some field flowers. There was one lily Margaret picked from the garden. It was from a plant that had been reluctant to bloom, and she and Nana had worked over it tenderly. That morning it came into full flower. Nana had brought some Victrola records from her Tryon home. These we played. Then Rod read some of Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyám. I paraphrased and read a poem of Hardy's, one verse of which runs:

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at  
the door,

Watching the full-starred heaven that winter sees,  
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,  
"She was one who had an eye for such mysteries?"

We carried Nana out under the maple trees and placed her in the carriage that was waiting to start her southward to where her man was buried.

I never forgave myself for once having given a friend mistaken rites. His funeral was designed to please his parents, but by my presence I aided and abetted that which I should not have. He was a Bohemian and a *boulevardier*. He was a scholar and a connoisseur. He was a scoffer at all conventions, and sooner or later he laughed at every one of his friends' proprieties. Yet we held ritual for him in an undertaker's parlor. We gave him platitudes in place of lust of life. At the moment when we sat like rows of crows in churchlike pews he was already somewhere else. If he troubled to look back at us he must have had sardonic laughter. If he was in heaven, because he would have understood their conversation he was at that moment sitting at a table with Cervantes and John Milton and was hearing great discourse from Virgil. If he was not in heaven he was in roisterous company with Rabelais and Boccaccio. He had just heard a ribald ode from Horace and was listening

to a song by Villon. He had had *caffè Turco* with the Devil. All this while we sat in a mortician's cell.

When you bury me, my friends, do not have stately mourning. Have no stranger pronounce platitudes over my body. Rather let some close friend read a grand and stirring thing such as I in life should have liked. Select some poem of adventure. Tell some tales of man's search for happiness. If there is to be music, let it have spirit. Then, if you must think on the brevity of life and the end of life, go you up to the edge of the sugar bush and sit there beside the great basswood tree to look out over the valley that I loved and watch for me one last sunset. Watch again the shadow of Dorset creep up the side of Tabor Mountain. But do not weep. I shall have had my full drink of life. Instead, as you go down through the pasture in the twilight, make a promise that you will miss no opportunity for the sight of beauty or the taking of joy. Promise me that you will spill no drop of the elixir of life and will not let the drink go stale.

When the old die, that is right. Louis Adamic's father felt no sorrow over the death of his brother Yanez. He said: "His death is like the old apple tree that used to stand in the meadow. One year it no longer bloomed and I cut it down." The death of the old is as simple as that. Thus death is simply rest and perhaps it is adventure; but of this last I am not sure. All that I know is that when my young sister died she smiled with a smile we could not understand and said: "Do not weep. My spirit is at the open window. I am happy." When Mother Rhodes died there was likewise a brief insight into the beyond. She had been an invalid almost unconscious for a year. But just before she died there was an effusion of white and holy light from her face. We all saw it and we wondered.

But I know of one death that was merely sleep. Death

once more visited our green fields that summer. There is no meadow, however besprinkled with daisies, but has its drama. Disaster may fall while the brightest of sunshine covers our lovely world. Disaster with its horny hands may wrench a flower of the field from the warm soil. And when death comes to the young, comes to one whose life has just begun to blossom, it seems unbelievable.

We have always had riding horses at the farm. Anne had her own horse, bought with the earnings of many years and careful savings toward this single purpose. She sat on her horse beautifully, for she had begun riding before she was large enough to mount alone. Whenever at the farm I heard fast hoofbeats on the road I would dash out to see a little girl, with hair flying, riding bareback with knees tight pressed against the beast's withers, round the curve into the yard. And horses loved Anne. They understood her when she spoke to them. She used to play a game with her horse, Lady. Lady would be loose about the yard. Lady would munch her way toward the woodshed door where the oats were stored. Out of the corner of her eye she would watch Anne. Then Anne sitting some distance off would say quietly, "Lady, no!" and Lady would obey and come away. The horse was willing to trick Anne if she could but would not disobey her spoken word.

Another passion of Anne's was to feel the bare earth and the grass beneath her naked feet. It seemed to do something to her spiritually. Bare feet are well enough about the lawn but were forbidden near the barn where the horses had been. But we were lax and Anne went up to the barn and stepped on a nail. It was just a little puncture but Margaret rushed her over to the fine hospital in Rutland and gave her antitetanus treatment. Nine days later I was awakened at two in the morning by Anne whimpering. She said that her jaw was stiff. I telephoned to

Rutland while Margaret dressed the girl. Anne fainted before we could get her into the car.

Then we roared through the night. The attendants were standing at the door to receive us. A spinal test showed that she had tetanus, unless she had meningitis. Two physicians drove in haste from Boston five hours away to make the decision. It proved to be tetanus, but the slight chance of a further injection might save her. On the other hand more antitetanus might kill her; but it would be a kindlier death. The Boston physicians, for all their war experience, found our local man with his country practice as well versed in tetanus as they.

It is part of my story to record his name: Clarence E. Ball. For twenty-four hours Doctor Ball kept her alive, and she gained. We went to a near-by hotel to rest, Margaret and I and Rod who refused to be separated from his sister at such a time. In the night it was necessary to give Anne an injection in the veins. It was then that the hotel-keeper routed us out and told us that we were needed. All breath, all pulse, had gone from Anne's body.

Fifteen is the wrong age to die. The flower had not yet bloomed. I stood by the door and remembered an essay on death that Anne had written at the age of thirteen. She had dreamed she was dead. We had buried her under the crab-apple tree at the top of the mountain. She had lain there all winter, quite happy. Then life had stirred deep in the soil and the woodbine had covered the bare earth of her grave—and the crab-apple tree had bloomed. The cattle grazed quietly about the grave but left the resting girl the maidenhair fern. And she thought her mother came to stand by the grave in a blue dress. But still there was contentment, for Anne had thought herself a part of nature. This memory supported me in a moment of greatest agony.

The delicate flame which we call life seemed to be ex-

tinguished in Anne for seven minutes. Then a miracle happened. A calm, white-haired man who sat by her bedside would not accept defeat. He quietly fed adrenalin directly into her heart through a long needle. The nurses applied a breathing machine. Gradually and slowly Anne came back into the world of living things. She became once more alive. She would live to see for herself the next blooms of the crab-apple tree. Where she had been on her little journey, she could not tell. All had seemed like sleep, and she awoke with a full memory of all things past except for those seven minutes.

Now this is the only real miracle I have ever seen. It was achieved by a true physician, and it was the demonstration of the progress which had stood for divinity to me that day that I discovered God in a laboratory. The surge which began with the protoplasm had evolved into that higher intelligence, which we call man. In the quiet physician who sat through the hours by the girl's bedside I saw symbolized man's inexplicable desire to help his fellow man. Behind Doctor Ball in unnamed laboratories scientists had labored to discover a stimulant for hearts too tired to continue the battle for life. They had found adrenalin.

I am not one who believes in miracles coming from abstract prayer, but I do believe in miracles which are wrought by the efforts of men imbued with the spirit of disinterested service. This is the divine inspiration which differentiates man from beast. To one physician who would not give up in the face of seeming failure, and to those unknown men whose indomitable labors in the cause of humanity remain anonymous, I wish to express a gratitude which transcends expression.



The author sitting on a dung heap welcomes the villagers.  
He is looking due south.



As a family we loved to dress up. Michael was a chip off the old block.





## XXIII

### GROWING PAINS OF A LAND-GRANT INSTITUTION

IT IS now twenty years that I have taught at Ohio State University. As I found it, it was a far different place from Chicago and Harvard where I had received my academic training. They were powerful, quite independent institutions, only morally responsible to the state and the public. Of course, both prided themselves on their contributions to mankind. Even Yale recently became conscious of man and established an institute to study mankind. But the services which Chicago and Harvard offered had a sort of remoteness from direct application, which gave them dignity. These services were largely in philosophy, the classics and pure science. The origin of the earth, the consideration of the atom or the lost O in Latin concerned them more than the production of a good insecticide, improvement in accounting systems or the manufacture of a more perfect brick. Of course such a statement does the endowed institutions a certain injustice, and that the state institutions are concerned only with the practical is equally untrue. But for the matter of emphasis the statement is well taken. Though at Ohio State we are tremendously interested in, shall I say, the medieval and classical, we have a larger concern for present-day needs, it would seem, than Chicago or Harvard. They dignify the medieval and sanc-

tify the classical far beyond the consideration of the present. The president of the University of Chicago has found the answer to philosophical needs in some sixty hoary and, I suspect, rather dusty volumes. He may be right, but somehow his solution to the problems of today does not have the vital character of the manner in which some of the less classically minded scholars are approaching the question of how to live.

I had, of course, a year's experience at Williams College. Williams was then requiring Greek before entrance. It was to an extent colonial in character—or, at least, not advanced beyond the Age of Enlightenment. One professor at Williams wrote me that I must feel embarrassed to be going to Ohio State University, where they honored a professor of hog cholera. Now hog cholera and anthrax and hoof-and-mouth disease would not be questions with which the usual professor in a classical college would soil himself, but of course they would have interested Pasteur. One of our liberal-thinking men at Ohio State University is the professor of poultry husbandry. He is an extremely important man in the state. He may have read little of Bergson, but he is looked up to by many farmers hereabout. I wonder if my Williams correspondent had bacon and eggs for breakfast. Also it is possible that a portion of his income is from Ohio farm mortgages or oil wells or coal mines. He may have stock in an Ohio factory whose management we have improved through our Bureau of Business Research.

A recent article in the magazine *Time* called the Ohio State University a "Service Station." I agreed with its flippancy—we are a service station. So are all endowed institutions; but the title was fixed upon us because of the number of conventions and popular institutes we held upon the campus last year. We had, indeed, something more

than twenty-five thousand guests. There was a week for farmers in which they studied better crop production while their wives learned about canning fruits. And in the evenings we gave over our halls while, to the music of old-time fiddlers, they did square dances. Then one day thousands of students representing their schools in music literally flooded over us—there was a school-band competition. This increase in music in the schools is one of the great educational advances in the last decade and is, I believe, a purely American development. And we gave hospitality to thousands of high-school students at a football game. Before the game all departments were open for inspection. This was not because we wanted more students, for we are overcrowded now, but because we wanted no young person in the state to miss the opportunity for higher education for lack of familiarity with the institution that belongs to him. At another institute the most important industrialists of the state were present. The accountants of the state gathered to find common solutions to their problems. Of course, the teachers flock back to learn the latest in methodology.

The truth is, though there is found on the campus medieval and classical learning, and though we represent the same things as Chicago and Harvard, we are much more. We are an institution of folkways and of living culture. The university belongs to the people of the state and they flock to its doors, use its halls, and love it. This may not please the aloof academicians of the holier, ivy colleges; but it offers a vitality and constructive purpose which is absorbing to one of my democratic upbringing. I believe that Whitman, were he alive, would have made a poem about it. Abraham Lincoln would have been pleased.

Within this university there are two types of professors, those who see a university as having only the function of

pursuing higher and more abstract studies and those who are interested in modern problems. There is also another division. There are those who believe in the old-fashioned discipline of study and those who would sidestep content to a degree in order to give more time for the individual development of intellectual processes. As you may guess, the division is about the same in the two cases. Those who would stand against the introduction of new courses are in many cases also against the introduction of new methods.

Thus Ohio State University has a multiplicity of functions. We are, indeed, a service station and our services are too great to list. It is our fault and our virtue that we have no single purpose. We are huge and, I suppose, have a lack of unity. There are on the campus more than fourteen thousand students at a time. There are ten colleges or schools and a number of institutes and bureaus of research and experimentation. Over our eleven hundred acres of ground there are seventy-odd buildings. A bus is necessary to get students to the more distant classes. There are well over two hundred full professors and eight hundred teachers of lesser rank. There are seventy departments of instruction, and courses run into the hundreds.

One may study Xenophon or dress design. One may study Voltaire, ceramics, refrigeration, the Reformation, factory management, portrait painting or horse judging.

The professor of horse judging happens to be a large, keen intelligent man. He makes no pretense to being a great intellectual. But he is a good teacher, and he knows it because of the extent to which men over the state look up to him. He teaches them more than horses—he teaches citizenship. He doesn't get the best educated students, but he gets the most earnest. His boys come to him usually raw and unpolished. But they are an intent and serious bunch of youngsters. It was at a good deal of sacrifice that

their parents sent them, and most of them are working to help themselves through. In some cases college boys will work perhaps for spending money, but these boys work for bread and butter and a new pair of shoes. They graduate from colleges knowing little about Euripides, but they do know a lot about horses. One can receive old-fashioned discipline studying horse anatomy as well as in memorizing irregular verbs. The art department has only reproductions of the great masters to show the students but animal husbandry has in its stalls living examples of some of the finest horses in the world. The boys begin to judge horses. They go to distant horse shows and practice judging. They organize their ideas and prepare a report, and that report must be in good English. Dressed neatly in their best clothes, they stand erect and deliver their reports orally before a group of strange judges. Ohio teams win again and again, on horse judgment, on organization, on English and on presentation.

These men graduate and go back to the corn-belt farms. They become leading citizens, and some after maturity obtain the coveted certificate of Master Farmer. The university has served the agricultural portion of the state and served it well. You must understand that these men received a broader cultural education than horse raising. They all had contacts with what is known as a liberal arts course. They studied history and the fine arts. They heard some Shakespeare and some good music. The University of Wisconsin even maintains an artist, John Steuart Curry, in the College of Agriculture in order that their farmers may better understand the processes of creative art. Michigan used to support Robert Frost for the same purpose.

Of course any university is patently something more than a service station. It is an institution which stands for

progress in civilization and the constant re-creation of liberalism in terms of the changing years. It is something more than a place where a new kind of insecticide is invented. Its staff is a group of men who march in the vanguard, who bring to a conservative and oftentimes even reluctant public those concepts which, freeing them from their old prejudices, lead to new intellectuality. In 1920 when I first came to Ohio State, I think the staff was more conscious of being a land-grant college than of constituting a great university. There were some fine scholarly liberals on the faculty, but the group as a whole did not have a common consciousness of its greater purpose. If the faculty as a whole had not yet begun to show open support to liberal thought, it seemed as if the board of trustees had not yet comprehended such an abstraction. It took a crisis to bring the university to general support of liberalism. That crisis developed out of the idea of military drill. Out of the struggle came a great university, and unfortunately the dismissal of one man, and indirectly later the resignation of several others.

Land-grant colleges must, by charter, offer military training, but the matter of compulsion is left to the institutions. Some students planned to revolt against drill. I happen to believe in drill as a service to the state. Some of the students were out-and-out pacifists. Some were Quakers or belonged to other war-objecting sects and some were "intellectuals." The leader unfortunately had a Russian Jewish name. This little group decided to throw down their arms at drill. I happened to know that to throw a gun on the ground is a particularly heinous offense in military eyes. I was at the time chairman of a committee which dealt with student matters. Working from the president's office, I persuaded the students to permit me to present their case to the faculty in orderly fashion.

Now faculty meetings are not usually attended by great numbers of conservatives, and it was they who were in favor of military drill on a compulsory basis. Members of the liberal group attend in rather greater numbers because they are naturally concerned with change. The meeting was stormy. I myself was too stormy. I was trying to win a point for the students, even though I was not in support of their principle. Some one got the motion laid on the table—which means that it can no longer be discussed at the meeting. So we adjourned for one minute and re-assembled in a new meeting. The motion to have the faculty rather than the administration decide upon compulsion of drill was passed by a small majority. This meant probably that the colleges of agriculture and engineering would force their students into the corps, but that arts and education and commerce might not.

So hell broke loose. Everybody went into a huddle. I was taken into conference with two generals and a colonel, and they were sputtering. Ever since my war days I had wanted to meet a general on even footing. The conservatives demanded a reconsideration of the matter. It was the first full meeting of the faculty I had ever seen. Men came from cubbyholes about the campus to demand their right to vote. Many of these, I had never seen before. The move to abolish compulsory drill lost. I did not worry about the cause, but I did about the students whose ideas were maligned in session. They were unjustly charged with every intellectual and patriotic offense one could list. Later I sat on the front porch of a house in Plymouth, Vermont, talking with President Coolidge.

Mr. Coolidge said: "You come from Ohio State University. I hear that the students out there objected to drill. What makes them think that they have a right to think for themselves?"

"But, Mr. Coolidge," I said, "that is exactly what we try to do—teach them to think for themselves."

After a riot some one has to be punished. It doesn't always matter who. One professor was dismissed, who had been at outs with the trustees for some time; but the grounds for dismissal did not seem sufficient to seventy-six of the faculty. We did not all agree with the wisdom of the action of this professor, but we rose to his defense. The case came to national attention. It represented the growing pains of the university. It brought us a sense of our intellectual and spiritual purpose. We felt that we must have academic freedom and proper tenure of office. All this was calmly but completely accomplished in later conferences between the trustees and a committee of the faculty.

Ohio State University today has all the guaranties of freedom of opinion and action that could be desired. I who am something of a rebel find myself content with administrative procedure. I am allowed within reason to teach as I want and what I want. I know that, if the administration and I come to differences of opinion, due consideration will be given to those differences. Ohio State University today is a liberal university, but it took a crisis to make it so.

There is, of course, always conflict of ideas in a great institution. There should be. Boards of trustees are rightly conservative: that is their function. They must be constantly vigilant to suppress moves on the part of the faculty that may endanger public relations. They stand between town and gown, and they know very well that in a state university the town pays for the gowns. Likewise, I think that most people are essentially conservative. If a man is advanced in ten per cent of his ideas, that is sufficient to mark him as a radical. There must be conservatives and liberals in any faculty in order to counterbalance each



other. I find myself as critical and standoffish from an extreme radical as from an extreme conservative. The crisis did much for me. It took from me violence of attack and substituted a method of procedure of willingness to take a little gain at a time. It gave me respect for the judicial mind.

There was one aftermath of the affair that affected a student. The young leader against drill with the Russian Jewish name took his defeat philosophically and quietly. He then went into the law school, supporting himself by teaching Americanization courses to immigrants—work that is not well paid and is chiefly disinterested patriotism. A local organization of women patriots discovered that a Russian had imbibed English-American ideals and was teaching them. This was unthinkable, and they caused him to be dismissed. He saw no way to continue with his law work, until a number of professors undertook to see the boy through. Unnecessarily he later paid us all back. He is now a leading young citizen of a near-by city and a member of our state legislature. He can always be counted on to befriend the university. When I returned from Europe a woman entered my office and, identifying herself with the interfering organization, asked me to help her write a patriotic speech. Such an opportunity comes seldom in a man's life. I was able to speak to her passionately for some ten minutes on her brand of Americanism and show her out the door.

If members of the university staff had clarified their issues and aims we had yet to defend the rights of academic freedom against intolerant and ignorant taxpayers. We had not—and indeed have not—entirely convinced a large portion of the public of our essential democratic aims. Democracy is by definition the sum total of individual opinions. We must have mass opinion, not directed from a

single source, but as a combination of ideas individually arrived at by each contributor. Every time we teach a student to think for himself, in spite of what Mr. Coolidge said, we are contributing to the maintenance of democratic government.

But there is a large block of the public that has a fascist approach to what it terms hundred-per-cent Americanism. It insists upon a compulsory salute to the flag whereas the educators believe in teaching the virtues of our national principles for which the flag stands and so achieving a voluntary salute that will carry worth and conviction. Democracy is a form of tolerance. Yet we are beset in our city with organizations whose intolerance grows out of ignorance of true Americanism, though one must grant these organizations sincerity of purpose. So we have, every so often, a Red hunt at the university. The last one was the combined effort of thirty-two organizations. All were moved by patriotism, however misguided. The last hunt was so patently ridiculous that it made friends for the university. The chief witness against us presented such absurdities that the university profited by his testimony.

It is easy to get up a Red hunt. The public loves it. There are a number of men always eager to be master of the hounds. One citizen for years has dogged our lectures and public meetings. He stands about in a slouch hat, which is supposed to disguise him, and glares at people as they pass out of the halls. Actually his absurdity serves our purpose because he is so laughable. Peace meetings, for some strange reason, are always supposed to emanate from Moscow. Why peace is so un-American a concept, I have not the least idea. In fact, if any one is different, if his thought is unconventional in any regard, his Americanism is in doubt. Actually, of course, Americanism and democracy stand for individualism. But the conservative

public fears any one it cannot understand. We must have no foreign isms, though in the past we have absorbed such isms as Christianity, and the ideas of Thomas Aquinas, Rousseau, John Locke and Calvin. We must not even study Karl Marx. One wonders how many of our hundred-per-cent Americans realize that they were raised under one of the great movements of collectivism, our compulsory school system. Many support our social taxations to equalize income without realizing that such a movement would have delighted Marx.

In a fashion these investigators and investigations and this opposition to our truly democratic purposes are our own fault. Here in Columbus we have a great institution, and yet we have not taught the people of the city wherein we live what are our essential purposes. We should not expect people to understand so abstract an idea as democracy without instruction. We profess that we know what democracy is, and we blame people of lesser training and intellectual opportunity than ourselves because they do not see as clearly as we. Any Red investigation is a justifiable challenge to the university, and such a challenge is always a maturing process. Such criticism by the public should be for us a measure of our failure to educate the public.

Well, other institutions have their troubles. The city of Cambridge has just forbidden Harvard University to keep within the confines of the city books which mention Lenin. Many universities are not supposed to teach evolution. I was asked by a publishing house to remove references to evolutionary processes from a text so that the book could be sold to a certain southern institution. Needless to say I did not alter the book and so did not sell it. Such challenges we educators must meet. Too often we do not really meet them but sit back and complain. A

person who wishes to be a liberal must be willing to fight for principles. Anyway, life is without purpose unless there is some kind of conflict to which one can lend a sword. There is no better fighter in the abstract than a true pacifist.

I was not always so philosophical about the throes of progress. I felt things too personally, and took too much to heart what I considered the failures of progress. Many days, even weeks, I felt unhappy and disillusioned. I always had, however, one retreat. I could go back to the house on Perry Street and close the door. There some nights and late into the night, with listeners scattered about the rooms, Marie Waller, her cigarette glowing in the dark, would play the piano. When Marie plays, music flows from her generous personality like clouds of happy emotion covering all conflict.

## XXIV

### ROMANTICISM IN THE CLASSROOM

WE creatures seem victims of circumstance. Usually we do things because we have no choice, for previous happenings have so conditioned us. I believe that I have contributed more than my share of the dramatic, perhaps too much of the dramatic, to the classroom because I had to—I was so conditioned. That I found certain educational value in this element has encouraged me to offer consciously that which at first I gave unwittingly. There are a great many elements in education, and no one man can contribute them all.

If my colleagues were not competently offering this or that component of education I might feel impelled to assist in those sides of the discipline. But since they make these contributions so excellently I see no reason why I should duplicate their efforts. And other teachers insist upon some contributions with which I disagree. Some of the disciplines that they force upon students are so dull that I cannot bring myself to assist in such teaching. I have the attitude that college courses are no more a preparation for life than any other four years of existence; rather they are just as much a part of life as the years to come. I see no reason why these years from which youth expects so much romantically should be made almost purposely dull. This is more than an educational policy with me, it is a species of religion.

I find myself not a churchly man, but I have some quite religious concepts. One of these concepts leads me to a reaction against the sackcloth and ashes of asceticism or anything that smacks of Puritanism. I believe that happiness and religion are closely allied, and I would not define "happiness" in terms of religion but "religion" in terms of happiness. This may be shocking to some, for it is really more pagan than Christian in the modern orthodox expression. If along with my thesis I teach students good taste in matters of life and social mores I can build for them a working philosophy which they will accept, be they church-minded or not. No age needs religion more than the twenties. It is a questioning age, and many of the concepts to which older people cling will serve youth and twenty not at all. But make the scheme of things happy, and youth is ready to follow—to follow even through academic hours on hard wooden benches.

Now, of course, I do not mean that a course in calculus or in bridge building, or in William James, should be rollicking. These are all subjects interesting in themselves, and they are a form of intellectual pleasure. There are, needless to say, varying degrees of dramatic interest in subject matter. Geology, for example, has a wonderful story to tell. Students like the subject; yet it has enough so-called disciplinarian material to please the most pedantic professor.

As I came to teach geography, in 1920, I found it a subject not far different from geology. The beginning course in college geography was in those days based upon an inadequate and dull textbook in the field of physical geography. Physical geography is really not geography, but the last chapter in geology. One can follow through its principles without ever coming into contact with a true geographic fact. The subject interested me as a geologist,

but to many it is a bore. The geographer should select facts from the study which he needs in order to analyze landscape; but he should start the student immediately in geographic facts, for there is no material for study that is better able to satisfy the urge of the twenties for the romance of far-away places. In short, I refuse to search out the dull and ladle it out to youth. There is a legend among educators that the dull is good discipline.

Did you know that in the desert of the Gobi the great winds urge the sands to sing a song as elusive as that of the sirens? You who have traveled on the sea know the excitement of approaching a strange shore, and how the water of the sea looks higher than the land and seems to submerge the base of the coastal villages. Have you ever been told that, when the fishing fleets put in with the tide in the Tyne ports of eastern England, it appears as if there were a forest of masts? For the boats are so numerous that they cover the surface of the river until one can cross it by walking from boat to boat. Or has any one ever described for you the Amazon River, as more than a line on the map of Brazil, as a broad sea-river, flowing always with a great surge, its muddy waters dividing two even lines of monotonous jungle, a highway of adventure?

Now the first, the singing sands, is what the physical geography will refer to as wind erosion. Explaining how the sea seems to contain too much water is merely a means of demonstrating the curvature of the earth. The forests of masts and the ships bumping one another as they crowd in with the tide are a measure of the extent of the fishing industry and of the dense, hungry populations of England. The romance of the Amazon is a trick to fix place geography in your mind.

Of course, no professor would tolerate a textbook so interesting, but texts seem written purposely to prevent the

teacher from any dramatization or, if you will, exercise of imagination. A geography of Europe will tell you of the traffic problem of cities of medieval origin; but that is not enough—it should describe the medieval scene. If you want to tell of the antiquity of the iron industry of central Europe, start with a picture of Siegfried's forge in the forest. If the Polish marshes furnish hay, do not hesitate to bring the hay in on barges under a red evening sky while the hay workers sing Slavic folksongs. The story of transportation is something more than the number of miles of paved roads and steel rails laid in a decade. Transportation is the artery of modern life and has a surge and roar which is grand drama.

Yet, still today, our texts for beginning geography are full of dull academic material. They are written by professors for professors and, as such, are of little interest to students. The students learn more about soil terminology than about how man works the soil. Never do they read Markham's *Man with the Hoe*. Rather they are taught that the erosive power of a stream varies as the sixth power of the velocity, and proceed rapidly to forget it.

It may be that dramatization and discipline are incompatible, but I rather think not. Students delight in facts that are made to live, though we greybeards are not convinced that students are competent to judge what is good for them. Indeed, none of my own textbooks comes up to the mark which I here set; but there is one that has virtue because of its dedication, a partial quotation from Carl Sandburg:

. . . if men

Tell you no stories about rockets,  
Shooting stars, horses of high ranges,  
Let them ask your pardon, excuse themselves,  
And go away.



I have come to the conclusion that I cannot "larn" students anything of first-class significance, and that, if I could, they would not remember it beyond the final examination. I appreciate that I must carry the class through a certain fundamental mass of facts in order that they may have a common experience. Ideas must be preceded by facts. Principles that are to be common to the class must be derived from the same facts. These facts and principles, of themselves, usually constitute an educational unit; but I hold the theory that such a unit is only the beginning of education, not the end. Education of the type that interests me begins after the student has left the classroom. When men gather at night about a study table to argue—then it is that education begins. Girls at such sessions, I suppose, sit on the end of the bed and eat peppermints. I am interested in the student's mind not so much when he is in class as when he is rummaging by himself in the library stacks. I want to influence the student's mind when he is on a long and lonely walk. The task I have is to project myself and my subject beyond the limits of the classroom. How is this done?

The teacher who is successful, to my mind—and I speak chiefly of the field of social science—is the one who dramatizes his facts. Having done this, he need not fear that the facts will elude the student as soon as he has left the room. Classes should be so interesting as to make the roll-call totally unnecessary. The ideal is to attract students who do not even work for credit. It is told of a grand teacher of geology at Harvard, named Shaler, that he taught a course so popular that it attracted students from other classrooms. The faculty decided the course was not disciplinary enough and refused to have it on their credit list. The following year Shaler gave it without credit, and

it was as crowded as ever. Maybe after all students do know what they want.\*

This, of course, presupposes that the teacher does not look upon his class as a whole but as a grouping of individuals. The ultimate in teaching is not to instruct a class but to stimulate individuals. We are perforce called upon to meet classes and not to have conferences with single students. We have not the pleasant situation of such institutions as Bennington, which are adequately staffed for conference teaching. But even though students are grouped in classes, I see no reason to discourage individual effort of the student. My method of overcoming the educational goose-step is simple and, I believe, effective. For each student I keep in my files a folder. During the class hour I spend much of the time throwing out incomplete and suggestive ideas. As each class includes students of many tastes and interests my ideas must be various. There is no reason to expect a common intellectual interest on the part of all. Yet I must attract the interest of every person. The students are encouraged to contribute ideas—the completion of my suggestions or any other material pertinent to the course—in themes and essays. These I place in the folders. I place no requirements on the number or length of papers. The student should not fail himself by failing to contribute all the ideas of which he is capable. A paper should be long enough to do justice to the subject. At the end of the term I sit me down to read through the papers in the folders. By doing so I have, in addition to the rather meaningless examination marks, an insight into the intellectual curiosity of the student and into his quality of mind. These papers are of wide variety. One person has read *The Good*

\* This year I organized a course of outside lectures on "The Art of Living." It had no attendance rolls, no examinations, and no credit. Fifty to two hundred and fifty students attended each session.

*Earth* and discovered therein environmentalism—the psychology of land in the mind and doings of Wang Lung. Another, led by remarks of mine on the importance of climate as a stimulation to the Italians during the Renaissance, has studied the lassitude of Florida climate. Another paper treats of a Utopian United States of Europe based upon the reality of resources. One student has read Conrad's *Typhoon*, and another, the monumental *Soils and Man*, the best book the government has ever issued. Now, mind you, I have taught them none of this except that I have enlarged upon the value of ideas. This work is their own and, therefore, truly of educational value.

To return to my first rule (make things dramatic), it would not do merely to offer the student a list of suggestive subjects. This would accomplish nothing. In most students, imagination and curiosity are latent and not developed. Ideas must be made real to them. For example, the thesis of one course which I teach on the historical geography of commerce may be simply stated as "Commerce carries ideas." This thesis must be elaborated and colored in order to sink into the student's mind. Now tell the student that every sailing ship that has put into quiet haven has borne with its bales of silk an invisible cargo of ideas, and the idea gets across. Actually bring the tired and complaining camels into a midway caravansary, or bring them to rest before the crenelated walls of some Lob Desert city and unload the bags and with them a burden of ideas, and the students get the point. Or better yet, give them an actual example. Tell them how Greek designs traveled to Phoenician ports, then over the weary miles of the Fertile Crescent, from thence by boat out of the Persian Gulf to the Cutch ports near the mouth of the Indus, so through the teeming cities of the Ganges, and by the difficult mountain passes of Burma finally to become friezes on

the walls of the lamaseries of Yünnan, and you have achieved a great deal. The crusades were not merely a stimulant to commerce, they enlivened civilization in all its medieval picturesqueness. Mere commerce in cabbages or iron ore does not send a student to search out strange books in a library; but dramatic ideas are exciting to the least promising of pupils. And once a student has discovered the pleasure of research the sky is the limit.

There is a rather extensive voluntary reading list for one of my courses, not especially well selected but with some good titles.

One day, wanting to sell a lot I owned, I walked into a real-estate agency to list it. The man in charge said: "You can't talk business with me for a half-hour. I once was a student of yours and I got to reading a list of books you had. Every year Mother and I get out that list and plan our reading. I want to tell you what books have meant to me." Self-education!

There is an intangible quality in students which teaching may bring out. I have no prescription for bringing out their mental character, and yet I know it is my most important task. It has something to do with imagination and something to do with art. And above all it is an extrovert quality. It is most easily discovered in students with a cultural background—a group that is less numerous in the state-supported institutions than in the endowed universities. But it can be developed to a limited extent in students of certain native ability. It is evidenced in a fine turn of phrase, a sense of the literary or the artistic or in flight of imagination. Where in an essay I find a paragraph or even a sentence holding something of real imagination or vivid expression I mark it A, without worrying about the rest of the paper.

Let no one think that I am alone in this methodology

of teaching. All through the university are men seeking the same developments in the student. Our college of education is a leader in the country in methods designed to bring out individuality. But that I support such devices of education, that I believe in the dramatic and the personal, is a natural consequence of the life I have led. I lay little emphasis upon the content of a course. The point is to teach the students to think. This can hardly be done in courses where the grade depends upon the objective test of the true-and-false sort. The mere measurement of factual information absorbed by the student is but the beginning, not the goal of education. And except for the encyclopedic mind, the collection of facts is not sufficient to keep up intellectual interest. It is often more pleasant to teach freshmen than seniors, for sometimes seniors are so bored by their many years of fact absorbing that they have the attitude, "Teach me, damn you, teach me if you can."

One of the bugbears of youth is the overserious teacher. Class hours should be pleasant. One trick of keeping students awake is to take the weak side of the argument, maintain it as long as possible, and then finally let the student put you down. In teaching environmentalism we must also deal with questions of genetics. Involved in such a lesson, I was attempting to defend the indefensible doctrine of acquired characteristics. This is the theory that if one cuts off the tail of a cow there will be achieved a tailless calf or, at least, a calf with a tail a wee bit shorter. In this case I had defended the theory too well, and, as it was time to confute myself, I told this story:

"I once knew a lifeguard on a bathing beach. He was exceedingly tanned except where his trunks protected him. As lifeguards will, he fell in love with a beach siren who likewise was badly tanned except where her trunks and a bib covered her. With benefit of clergy they had children.

Thus, with both civil and Mendelian laws in effect, when the children were born they were badly tanned except in their middles and their breasts were alternate strips of tan and white. Class dismissed."

## XXV

### ROMANTICISM IN THE MODERN WORLD

OF what stuff is this romanticism? Is it merely the glossing over of stark realities with a wash of color, a form of unjustified optimism, a type of delayed adolescence which includes climbing over garden walls? If so, it can be dismissed with a tolerant smile. Perhaps, on the other hand, it has a distinct function which our modern world has overlooked. Surely the more like *Brave New World* our society becomes, the greater the need for the romanticist. After the rationalist has come to the end of his labors, after all the certified facts have been arrayed, there is yet lacking an essential depth to our philosophy. Moreover, the rationalistic processes of thought may become boring because they are so repetitious. For even though new facts are constantly being discovered, under the rationalist they are arranged according to well-worn formulas. Having exact definitions, the rationalist can make exact postulations; and then if one has the formula of logic one can almost immediately see to the conclusion. Interest begins to wane when one has found an exact definition for every intellectual experience. Moreover, repetition does not spell progress, and logic becomes dogmatic. Dogma is a killjoy.

Now the romanticist is he who is willing to venture beyond the metes and bounds of rational security. Our romanticist does not fear insecurity so much as he fears the

boredom of the obvious. He goes further. The romanticist believes that not all things that can be proved with mathematical surety are true, and—what is more to the point—that some of the greatest truths have not been proved or are unprovable.

At luncheon with James Stephens, the mystic, I once discussed fairies. We did not argue the existence of fairies, but their probable quality. The discussion helped me, not because of any convictions of the existence of the little folk, but because it brought to me an open-mindedness toward things we do not understand and have not proved. Most things that can be proved are easily comprehensible. But there is a world of ideas and concepts that lies just beyond our sensibilities. The mind is a poor thing, and our training is worse. We are taught to think conventionally, which is deadly to intellectual progress. We are limited in our concepts by the rationalist's definitions. So long as we hold exactly to these definitions our processes of thought are restricted.

I once heard Bohr, the Danish physicist, explain that it was not on the atomic theory (his contribution to science) that he wished to speak so much as on an article he had written that was essentially an offering to a new process of thinking. Once this new process of thinking was established, the atomic theory was easily conceived.

"Now," he said, "if some one will offer the proper process of thought we can perhaps easily understand the origin of life."

In short, it is less the difficulty of solutions of the secrets of nature than our mental limitations that prevent our philosophical progress. As soon as we have increased our sensibilities we shall have opened for us new and important fields. The teacher especially realizes these limitations. They are his own limitations and those of his students.



In directing research, the problem is to increase the student's sensibility, to develop a lightness of imagination, and to create in him the willingness to explore unconventional paths. These are romantic qualities.

The most restricting matters are those of definition and terminology. Our greatest hindrance to intellectual progress seems at times to be the question of vocabulary. Limiting words and concepts stand in our way. We are unable to read between the lines and, indeed, the writer too seldom leaves implications. The rationalist prides himself upon his exact language, and so makes dull reading. He says that loose writing and thinking—I prefer to say, flexible writing and thinking—are for poets. And yet there are scientists who have curiosity about lands beyond the horizon and colors beyond the spectrum—both elements not to be put into words. It is not more proofs of what we already know that are needed, but the vision of the romantic thinker into realms which are outside the range of standardized logic. Once the barrier is down and we explore new fields, we shall meet objects and qualities of objects for which we have no names. Do not let this lack of definitions bother you, for you will have a rationalist following in your footsteps who will define all and create a terminology and classification before night falls.

Perhaps we should have been better off if we had put up the bars and excluded our rationalist from our new-found fields—just as no truth is absolute, no definition is correct and all generalizations are false including this one. Such a concept is easily demonstrated. What damage has been done by the terminologists who make definitions of God-head! What harm they have wrought to religion! Science, like art, is in a decadent stage when it becomes conventionalized. Conventionalization is always a poor omen. When a period or school of art shows convention one can prophesy

that a new school is about to be born. What science lacks is not new observers but more Einsteins. Indeed, philosophical progress can be measured by the willingness to explore. The complacent and the timid stay at home or travel well-marked highways. Leaven in intellectual life comes from meeting the unexpected rather than the calculated. The stimulation that means progress is for those that search out perilous frontiers of the mind. He who is willing to meet the unknown is the best romanticist. He is the knight-errant and today seeks adventure in undefined fields of intellectual or artistic activity. And, be he scientist or creative artist, he is of the same cloth. He is a romanticist who dares failure rather than bow to the fear of change.

Am I alone in these concepts? Do I have no authorities to support me? Randall in *The Making of the Modern Mind* has an excellent review of romantic thought in the nineteenth century. He saw the rise of modern romanticism as a revolt against Newtonian ideas and beliefs of the eighteenth century Age of Reason. He makes the claim that without the flexibility of romantic attitudes evolution, all the fine work of Darwin and Spencer, could hardly have come into being. More than that, this movement, which may have been something the same as that for which thirteenth century philosophy stood, immeasurably enlivened poetry and art beyond that of the rationalist century which preceded. Randall thanks romanticism for improvement upon the artistry of Versailles, of Watteau, Pope, Molière and Voltaire. Goethe and his school found Newtonian processes of thought not so much wrong as irrelevant. Life, in Goethe's terms, was broader than intelligence. I recommend the reading of Santayana's "Faust" in the volume *Three Philosophical Poems*. Here Goethe is thought of as giving the sum total of life without troubling

about definitions. He does not "try to harness the world in a brain-spun terminology."

Romanticism is a form of open-mindedness. William James said that, though our experience teaches us all crows are black, we should never cease to look for a white crow. Best I like Mephistopheles' confirmation of Faust's belief that:

Gray and ashen, my friend, is every science,  
And only the golden tree of life is green.

So much for an authoritarian background. Frankly, it was searched out after I had arrived at my conclusions. It but confirmed what I already thought. Indeed, it is not characteristic of a romanticist that he should care for authoritarian support. Rather it is the rationalist who turns to authoritarian argument or empiricism, while the romantic obtains conviction through personal reactions. All this then is merely a concession to any authoritarian who may have read this far.

My own subject, geography, illustrates well the contrasts between the two schools of thought. This is true because of the nature of geographic content. In geography there are two approaches. Geography is the reciprocal relation between environment and life; that is to say, the relationship may be of the influence of the earth upon man or it may be of man's altering of the earth's surface. The first group of relationships is a phase of environmentalism, while the second group of relationships comes under what we term "cultural geography." Since landscape is largely of artificial character, most geographers are cultural geographers, concerning themselves only with tangible evidence of the geographic relationship. One is, of course, interested in their findings of fact, but it must be said that many of their conclusions, as I have said before, are ob-

vious, especially in that they are repetitious. Their work smacks too much of inventory. They count cabbages in a field and decide that in this region man grows cabbages. Moreover, they grow cabbages because, in part, they cannot grow coconuts.

The field of environmentalism has greater possibilities than seem today to be realized. The environmentalistic approach deals with the influence of the soil, the air and the sea upon man. Because these influences cannot be weighed and measured, they are difficult to judge. Their importance is best measured in terms of the centuries. Since the earthy factors in relation to man are vague their importance is susceptible of overstatement. Obviously, what the rationalist fears most is overstatement. But the charm and significance of research in the environmentalistic field lies in this very uncertain quality of the postulations and the controversial character of the conclusions.

It is easy to understand this avoidance of environmentalism by the rationalistic geographers. They wish geography to be an exact science. But by their avoidance it would seem that they limit their philosophy. This is unfortunate because the limits which they have imposed have prevented the subject from gaining the proper esteem of other scholars. Hence some of the greater universities today are without a department of geography. The philosophic depth which is lacking can be obtained through environmentalism. In this field it will be the romanticist who will be the first to venture. Such a statement should be elaborated.

Geography in one important form is a regional study. Geographers study regional complexes of culture. The cultural geographer measures regionalism in terms of purity of economic program. Once he has described the economy of the region and classified it, he feels that his task is completed. But one can go further. The ultimate and most

sensitive measure of regionalism is the human response to the regional complex. If this is so, there is a geography of mental characteristics, a regional psychology. If you can discover that Italians are spiritually Italian because they live in Italy, you have an important fact. The impasse in which Europe finds itself today cannot be explained entirely by the distribution of resources. Racial hatreds are partly the result of provincial contrasts and are more subtle than resource statistics.

So if geographers can contribute to a knowledge of conflicting national psychologies the world will listen with respect. Of course, no pure rationalist will have anything to do with such vague ideas, but these imponderables will delight the pathfinder. Without equipment to write upon other subjects, I yet dare to believe that in history, chemistry or bridge building the researcher with imagination, with forgetfulness of conventionality, and with courage to enter the unknown has great contributions to make.

I suppose that the essential element in romantic philosophy is the lack of fear of the strange. The romanticist is he who rides forth into unknown territory looking for any new and good adventure. The romanticist is always the individualist. His love of meeting the strange makes him a marked man. People fear the individual who is so unconventional. They say he is Red. There are organizations which maintain standing committees dedicated to fear of the strange. Curiously enough, these are labeled Committees of Americanism. They stand against any change, any new ideas; and yet democracy commends itself to us because of its inherent ability to adjust itself to change. It is its flexibility which assures democracy of permanence. It is the unchanging government that will fail to stand the test of new situations. Democracy is the result of the aggregate of opinions individually arrived at. Our fearful

organizations would defeat the very purposes of democracy by creating mass opinion which they control. When democracy no longer gives support to individualism, its days are numbered.

Well, I break a lance where I may. I urge a little daring, a bit of imagination, a bit of individual expression in this student and that. If I reach ten per cent of my class I count myself a success. Perhaps that is numerically enough. This would be a sorry world were it inhabited only by rampant romantics.













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